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LANCASHIRE NOVELISTS.

MRS. GASKELL.

BY JOHN MORTIMER.

“**T**HOUGH a Londoner by birth,” says Mrs. Gaskell, “I was early motherless, and was taken when only a year old to my dear *adopted native* town, Knutsford.” In that town she spent most of the years of her early youth, but during the greater part of her life, and until the end of it, including all the years of her authorship she had her home in Manchester, which has, in a sense, also become native to her by adoption. It is by virtue of this long residence, and intimate literary association, that we lay claim to the privilege of including her among the Lancashire novelists. For reasons, unrevealed to us, but which we must assume were perfectly satisfactory to herself, she desired that no story of her life should be given to the world. However we may regret this injunction, by which there has been withheld from us something which would have been very precious in the possession, her right to lay it upon those she left behind, must be regarded as unquestionable, and as carrying along with it an obligation of fulfilment as sacred as that which pertains to a last will and testament. In the absence of the larger knowledge we have to content ourselves with such odds and ends of biography as are obtainable. These,

gathered together from magazine articles, and various other sources, may be found, arranged in an orderly fashion in two special sources of information. In the *Dictionary of National Biography*, there is an article containing a clear statement of facts, combined with a critical estimate of her work, in brief, from the scholarly pen of Dr. A. W. Ward, familiar to us from his long association with literature at the Owens College, and in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, there is an informing and sympathetic presentment to the same effect by Miss F. Mason. In addition to these may be named two important contributions from members of the Manchester Literary Club, one by Mr. W. E. A. Axon, consisting of a carefully compiled Bibliography, which has been published in the Club's "Transactions," and another, in separate book form, entitled "Mrs. Gaskell and Knutsford," by the Rev. George A. Payne. In the evolution of the sketch now submitted, use will have to be made, for narrative purposes, of these recorded facts. For the estimate to be gained, of those inward gifts and graces, which, after all, concern us most, and constitute for her readers the real Mrs. Gaskell, we have that full revelation of herself, which she has given us in her books. A portrait of a writer is always welcome to a reader, so, for illuminative purposes, a prefatory word may be said regarding the outward appearance of our authoress. We are told that in her youth, Mrs. Gaskell displayed attractions of face and form, which commended themselves to the painter and the sculptor, and we have artistic proof that in her latest years, this attractiveness was still an abiding quality. In the Christie library of the Owens College there is a marble bust suggestive of the beauty which is associated with the earlier period of her life, and on the front of the Post Office at Knutsford, there is a bas-relief in bronze, which shows her appearance,

a year or two before her death. In the marble figure the head is finely poised upon the pillar of the neck, and the expression of her upward-glancing face is joyous and hopeful. In the bronze, the head is bent slightly forward, and the drapery reaches to the chin; the face is still beautiful, in a mature way, but the expression is that of deep meditation. In addition to these, there is a portrait by Richmond, which belongs to an intermediate period. In this the face is sweetly pensive, and rendered oval by the arrangement of the hair, which is brought down over the ears in wavy folds, after the fashion of the time, reminding one of a similar delineation of Charlotte Brontë by the same artist.

Mrs. Gaskell's life, as far as we are permitted to know it, was not an eventful one, and in reviewing it and the outcome of it, we recognise a certain duality of circumstance and influence pervading both. Her life divides itself broadly into two periods, each with marked conditions of its own. The years of maidenhood belong to Knutsford, and those of her married life to Manchester, the environment in each case, as we shall see, counting for much in the development and expression of her genius, of which it may not be altogether fanciful to say, that in certain manifestations, Knutsford represents the seed time, and Manchester the harvest. To carry the idea of duality a little further, it may be pointed out how she shows a disposition at one time to deal with life on its restful side, its idyllic conditions and light comedy, and at another to a sombre expression, and a grappling with the deeper and darker problems. Two books which she has given us may be taken as typical in this regard, "*Cranford*" and "*Mary Barton*." The one with its delicate humour, its playfulness, its idyllic sweetness, and repose, had its germ and genesis in Knutsford, the country town, with its pastoral surroundings, and its old-

world customs and fashions, the other with its economic questionings, its sombre colouring, and tragic incident, is the outcome of murky Manchester, of manufacturing conditions and the storm and stress of life.

The narrative, dividing itself as it does into two parts, may be dealt with in two chapters, and for the commencement of the first we are carried back to the year 1820, when Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson was born on September 29th at Chelsea, the exact locality being Lindsay Row, a part of Cheyne Walk; thus was she associated, in her earliest domicile, with Thomas Carlyle, the friend of her later life, who came to reside in that neighbourhood twenty years afterwards. The house, we are told, is standing yet, and still commands, from its windows, a view of the River Thames, in a bend of it, "as it flows from Cheyne Row toward the sunset, past Fulham Palace, where the Bishops dwell, and Hampton Court and its histories, out into the country plain beyond." The sight of this river came as a comforting influence to young Elizabeth, in subsequent days of residence there, otherwise marked with a sense of much unhappiness.

Her father was William Stevenson, who was born at Berwick-on-Tweed, and her mother was Elizabeth Holland, daughter of Mr. Holland, of Sandlebridge, near Knutsford. Of her father we learn that he was a man of varied acquirements, who in his time played many parts. Local touch we have with him in the fact that in his younger days he was a classical tutor at the Manchester Academy, and during that time preached at Dob Lane Chapel. He gave up the idea of the ministry however, because he could not reconcile it with his conscience to earn his living in that way. Afterwards, in turn, he was a farmer, an instructor of students in an educational establishment of his own, and finally in the

Chelsea days, a keeper of the Records to the Treasury of London. He displayed considerable literary ability, editing at one time the *Scots Magazine*, and afterwards the *Annual Register*, and otherwise exercising his pen voluminously in reviews on subjects relating to agriculture, education, and commerce. In view of these facts the literary disposition in his daughter has been regarded as hereditary. In any case in his personality he provided her with materials for literary study. Though it has been said that none of her characters are exact portraits it is more than probable that, as George Eliot did, Mrs. Gaskell has given us, notably in "Cousin Phillis," a more or less life-like depiction of her father, whose tastes, dispositions, and many-sidedness, may be found reflected in Mr. Holman, the farmer-minister, the practical, energetic, strong-minded, and pious puritan, with a craving for universal knowledge, who not only loved his Bible, but had a classical affection for Virgil. And similarly, in Mr. Hale, the Vicar of Helstone, in "North and South," who gave up his living on conscientious grounds and took to teaching students in a manufacturing town, we may distinguish some features of her father, in his attitude towards the ministry. In connection with this matter of hereditary influence, it would seem that an interest manifested in the sea, and sea-faring people, which finds its expression more particularly in "Sylvia's Lovers," is traceable in the same way. Her paternal grandfather was a captain in the Royal Navy, an uncle, Joseph Stevenson, was a lieutenant in the same service, and her brother Charles held a similar position in the Merchant Navy. The death of her uncle in a French prison, and the mysterious disappearance of her brother in his last voyage, afford a clue to the origin of certain episodes of a like nature which crop up in her novels.

In the circumstances of her birth she was not happy.

Within a month of that event her mother died, and the little one was taken care of by a shopkeeper's wife until a friendly Mrs. Whittington conveyed her to Knutsford, there to find a home with her mother's sister, Mrs. Lumb. In "Mary Barton" there is a story told, in the Lancashire dialect, a blend of humour and pathos, relating to the conveyance from London to Manchester of an orphan baby by its two grandfathers, an incident which is said to have been suggested by this infantile experience.

To that aunt of hers, who had troubles of her own, of a domestic kind, and who was the mother of a crippled child, whose life was brief, she became a second daughter. They dwelt together in a house upon the heath, and there with an environment admirably suited to the development which resulted from it, she began to receive those impressions which I venture to think gave force and colour to one special manifestation of her genius. There is no detailed record of her early days, but imagination may serve for the production of such a picture as is possible. In the first place you have a country town, old-fashioned in its character, and not without picturesqueness of detail in the quaint architecture of its long narrow streets. Though it may not correspond in exact detail, Mrs. Gaskell, no doubt, had Knutsford in her mind when she wrote the description given by Mr. Harrison, in his "Confessions" of his first view of it, from the bow window above Jocelyn's shop, looking up and down the main street. He says, "Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in details, but altogether they look well, they have not that flat unrelieved front which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a bow window—every now and then a gable, cutting



up against the sky—occasionally a projecting upper story—throws good effect of light and shadow along the street, and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the white-wash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tint, more like the stone of which Mayence is built, than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth to the colouring. Then here and there a dwelling-house has a court in front, with a grass plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two—limes or horse chestnuts, which send their great projecting upper branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter in the pavement in the times of summer showers." Then, in the real Knutsford, there were the old-fashioned houses, with the old-fashioned walled gardens, and the old hostelrys, chief among them being the "Royal George," with its oak staircase and wainscoatings, its old oak furniture and cupboards, its cabinets of old china, and its old pictures on its walls. Here was the assembly room, where the people came to dance, and where in "Cranford" Signor Brunoni performed his conjuring feats. Then about the town, too, were the tree-shaded roads, the old halls, among them those of Tatton, Tabley, and Toft with their broad park-lands, that of Tatton having its lodge gate at the end of the main street which was in mind, no doubt, and, perhaps, a personal reminiscence, when in "Wives and Daughters" we are given a description of Molly Gibson's first visit to the "Towers." "Green velvet lawns, bathed in sunshine, stretched away on every side into the finely-wooded park; if there were divisions, and ha-has between the soft sunny sweeps of grass, and the dark gloom of the forest trees beyond, Molly did not see them; and the melting away of exquisite cultivation into the wilderness had an inexplicable charm to her. Near the house there were walls and fences, but they were covered with climbing roses,

and rare honeysuckles, and other creepers just bursting into bloom. There were flower-beds, too, scarlet, crimson, blue, orange, masses of blossom lying on the greensward." Then, for the girl there was Sandlebridge, too, her grandfather's house identified, as some think, with Woodley, the residence of Mr. Holbrook, the old bachelor in "Cranford." "Woodley," we are told, "stood among fields; and there was an old-fashioned garden where roses and currant bushes touched each other, and where the feathery asparagus formed a pretty background to the pinks and gilly-flowers; there was no drive up to the door. We got out at a little gate and walked up a straight box-edged path." There are some, too, who see in Mr. Holbrook a resemblance to grandfather Holland, who was a yeoman, farming his own land at Sandlebridge, who has been described as a delightful optimist, with a disposition to look ever at the bright side of things, as he walked cheerfully over his fields, or tranquilly smoked his pipe in an arm-chair coeval with himself. His son, Peter Holland, the Knutsford doctor, resided at the Church House, in the town, and intimate association with him would certainly prove useful when certain doctors were to be brought upon the scene in "Cranford," in "Wives and Daughters," and in "Mr. Harrison's Confessions." Then there was the old Unitarian Chapel, standing within its own enclosure on a green slope at the end of the town, an old-world, weather-worn, grey stone building, built more than two centuries ago. It has a background of trees, and the grave-yard occupies the green slope. When "Ruth" came to be written it found its place there, and is thus described: "The staircases which led to the galleries were outside, at each end of the building, and the irregular roof and worn stone steps looked grey and stained by time and weather. The grassy hillocks each with

a little upright headstone were shaded by a grand old wych-elm. A lilac bush or two, a white rose tree, and a few laburnums, all old and gnarled enough were planted round the chapel yard, and the casement windows of the chapel were made of heavy-leaded diamond-shaped panes, almost covered with ivy, producing a green gloom, not without its solemnity within. The interior of the building was plain and simple, as plain and simple could be. When it was fitted up, oak timber was much cheaper than it is now, so the wood-work was all of that description, but roughly hewed, for the early builders had not much wealth to spare. The walls were whitewashed, and were recipients of the shadows of the beauty without; on their white plains the tracery of the ivy might be seen, now still, now stirred, by the sudden flight of some little bird."

For fifteen years our novelist lived among these surroundings, absorbing, as it were, the outward and inward life of the place, and laying up a rich store of impressions both of nature and human nature, to be drawn upon when the time came for the exercise of the creative power. At the age of fifteen she is sent to a school at Stratford-on-Avon, there to remain two years. At the end of that time she goes back to Chelsea, to live for the next two years, with her father and a stepmother, under conditions to be remembered afterwards with a sense of unhappiness. Under her father's tuition her studies are enlarged, to the inclusion of a knowledge of Latin, French, and Italian; books are read eagerly, and life is made sweeter by the companionship of such poets as Scott, Goldsmith, Pope, and Cowper. When, at the end of two years, her father dies, she goes back to Knutsford and Aunt Lumb, to migrate again, however, at certain seasons, during the next three years, at one time to Edinburgh, with experiences there, which are afterwards to appear in "My Lady Lud-

low," and again to Newcastle-on-Tyne, there to abide with William Turner, a Unitarian minister of great learning who must have been a most estimable man if, as is supposed, he furnished the idea of Mr. Benson, in "Ruth."

To Knutsford as to home, she comes again, to leave it, however, under conditions which bring to a close the first chapter in her life. We have now reached the year 1832, and, without any particulars relating to the love-making, we learn that, on a day in August of that year, at the parish church of her adopted town, Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson was married to William Gaskell, co-pastor of the Unitarian chapel in Cross Street, Manchester. She had evidently won the affections of the Knutsford folk, for there was great rejoicing over the event, and, in accordance with an ancient custom, they sprinkled sand of red and white, in quaint devices before their houses and expressed their good wishes to the happy couple in verse to this effect :

Long may they live  
Happy may they be  
Blest with content  
And from misfortune free !  
Long may they live  
Happy may they be,  
And blest with numerous  
Pro-ge-ny !

In the second chapter, where the scene changes from the Heath at Knutsford to Dover Street in Manchester, where the Gaskells came to live, we are in a new environment, and seem to get into closer and more intimate touch with our novelist, to be, as it were, on common ground with her, and here, it is fitting that a brief word should be said, comprehensively, about the husband who was to influence her life so strongly. To some of us he was, for many years, a familiar figure in our city streets, a man of dignified and stately presence, one to be singled out in a crowd. "In

appearance," says one who knew him well, "Mr. Gaskell was somewhat tall, rather slender, and he walked and stood with stately graciousness; there was something clean, and sweet, and refined, and pure in his very presence. It used to be said that his appearance in the pulpit was a sermon in itself, as certainly it was a benediction." He was a scholarly man, and, apart from his pastoral duties, he at times sat in the professor's chair at Manchester New College, at the Owens College, and the Working Men's College, his subjects being English literature, History, and Logic. He studied the dialect of Lancashire closely, and delivered lectures upon it. No doubt Mrs. Gaskell benefited by this knowledge when she came to use the folk-speech so freely and effectively in her novels. Though not an author in any distinguished sense, he wrote hymns for his church, remarkable for their clearness of expression and deep devotional feeling. These have never been collected, but quite a long list of them has been made by Mr. Ernest Axon, and, together with a bibliography of Mrs. Gaskell's published writings, has been preserved in the Transactions of the Manchester Literary Club. Mr. Gaskell not only lectured on literature to students from the academic chair, but also from convenient platforms, to poor folk, a favourite subject being, "The Poets and Poetry of Humble Life"; and it is significant in this connection, to find that the first literary note struck by Mrs. Gaskell was an attempt, in collaboration with her husband, to reflect in verse the poetry which they had found in the lives of the poor people about them. Writing afterwards, to one of the Howitt's she says, "We once thought of *trying* to write sketches among the poor, *rather* in the manner of Crabbe (now don't think this is presumptuous) but in a more seeing-beauty spirit; and one—the only one—was published in Blackwood, January, 1837. But I suppose we spoke our

plan near a dog-rose, for it never went any further." The last sentence has reference to a superstition connecting the dog-rose with ill-luck, the belief being that a plan formed while sitting near one would never succeed, and the reference playfully discloses a certain predisposition to the mysterious in Mrs. Gaskell's nature. In the year following she tried her 'prentice hand at descriptive writing, which took the form of an account of Clopton Hall, afterwards published in William Howitt's "Visits to Remarkable Places." After this there is a long pause, and meanwhile, we are to think of Mrs. Gaskell as mainly occupied with the affairs of her home, but regarding the life about her with observant eyes, and entering sympathetically into her husband's tastes and occupations. The glimpses we get of her in these relationships are altogether beautiful and consistent. At this time and ever afterwards she is associated in our mind with the perfect ideal of a wife and mother, and, outside this first sphere of duty, with an interest in poor folk, that was not merely sentimental, but deep-rooted in heart-felt sympathy and practical philanthropy. In times of sorrow and adversity they found in her a helper and a friend, and one attractive picture we get of her is as the centre of a group of factory girls gathered about her in her own home, to whom she is not only teaching sewing, but, by an intimate companionship, is seeking to guide and regulate their lives. Thus the impression first gained is that of the benevolent high-souled pure-minded woman; the consummate artist is a later revelation.

The revelation, in its double sense, came to the world in "Mary Barton" and, inasmuch as that book marks the true beginning of her literary career it will be convenient at this point to take a survey, in brief, of the general result. This, in the edition before me, consists of

eight volumes, containing about forty stories, long and short; of these half-a-dozen are in the novel form, and stand out prominently from the rest. In the order of production they are "Mary Barton," "Cranford," "Ruth," "North and South," "Sylvia's Lovers," and "Wives and Daughters." Apart from these there is the remarkable "Life of Charlotte Brontë," which came about midway in the period of literary production. The stories cover a wide field, and in their number and variety of subjects, are evidences of a special if not preponderating genius in that direction. The novels may be separated into two groups, the one relating to her Manchester life, and the other to her Knutsford and other outside influences and experiences, and it is interesting to observe how our author alternates between the one influence and the other, and how the Knutsford one proves the strongest and most-abiding.

In reviewing Mrs. Gaskell's life and work one is struck with the lateness of the time at which her marvellous gifts were disclosed. They were latent, of course, for she was a born story-teller, and, in unpublished form, must have so exercised herself. There is a tradition that, as a girl, she had gained a reputation in this way, and, as a mother, one cannot help thinking of her as a teller of tales to her children by the household fire, blending invention with fact, and charming her listeners in a way to be afterwards felt by a larger circle outside, and without the utterance of anything which was not consistent with the pure atmosphere of the home circle. She made her appearance publicly at a time of great literary expression, the time of Thackeray, Dickens, and a crowd of other story-tellers, yet at once in "Mary Barton," she was recognised as a writer of marked individuality and power. It has been said that genius, in its manifestation, is usually

moulded and directed by preceding or current influences which are traceable in the results, and it has been suggested that "Mary Barton" owes its genesis to Disraeli's "Sybil," but speculations of that kind are of doubtful value. It has been suggested too, that on the "Cranford" side, Jane Austen's influence is perceptible. In the order of time Mrs. Gaskell is her successor, and when engaged in the same field, displays the same delicate susceptibility, the same easy grace and repose of manner, and the same disposition to a subtly-expressed humour, suggestive of covert satire. But she was no copyist; whatever she did was native to herself and original. Her range is wider too, and it is in only one department of her work that you are reminded of the earlier novelist. Her disposition was to write more strenuously and to a more serious purpose. "Cranford" might be possible for Jane Austen, but one does not think of her as a possible writer of "Mary Barton." Mrs. Gaskell's great contemporary novelist was Charlotte Brontë, with whom, hand-in-hand, as it were, in literary friendship and association, she will go down to posterity. Mrs. Gaskell's genius, however, in scope and power, and in that quality which we call intensity, falls below that of her friend. Both drew largely from their personal experiences, but these and other underlying causes were widely different. Mrs. Gaskell's life, in the main current of it, flowed on with a calm tranquillity; Miss Brontë's was storm-tossed and turbulent.

As a novelist, the human interest is, with Mrs. Gaskell, always in the foreground; it is the story and not the accessories with which she is most concerned, and yet, as a descriptive writer, she is, in her own sphere, without a rival. Her eye is microscopical; she crowds her pages with details, and yet is never for a moment tedious, and nowhere can you regard



anything as superfluous or irrelevant. She is a perfect artist in dealing with interiors, and whether she is describing John Barton's home in Manchester, the vicar's parlour at Duncombe, the farm house where Sylvia dwelt at Monkshaven, or Lady Ludlow's sitting room at Hanbury Court, you have in each case, a specimen of Dutch painting, perfect in its way. In nature nothing seems to escape her, but it is only incidentally that you become aware of this as when, in "The Sexton's Hero," she gives you a pre-raphaelite reproduction of an old grey stone wall "rich in colouring made by lichens, ferns, ivy of the most tender green, and most delicate tracery, and the vivid scarlet of the crane's-bill—which found a home in every nook and crevice—while at the summit of that old wall flaunted some unpruned tendrils of the vine, and long flower-laden branches of the climbing rose-tree trained against the inner side." She very rarely describes scenery on a large scale. It comes in incidentally, as glimpses of the mountains came to the eye of Ruth, seen between the houses, as she walked along the street of a Welsh village. Yet in "Sylvia's Lovers," the picture she gives of Whitby, with its red-tiled houses, grouped steeply on the rising ground above the narrow harbour, with its forest of masts, together with the coast line, bordered by rocks and cliffs, with the brushwood-clad hollows that lead to the higher lands behind, shows that had she chosen she could have excelled in description in the wider area.

"Mary Barton," which had its birthplace in Rumford Street, to which the Gaskell's removed in 1842, is a story of affliction which was cradled in affliction, personal to the writer. In 1844, while on a visit to Festiniog, in North Wales, her only boy, Willie, died from scarlet fever, and it was to divert her mind from its acute grief that she began to write her novel. In this effort as we have seen, she

at once, and in a remarkable way, disclosed the powers which, up to this time had been latent. We learn how, having once begun, she wrote with the pen of a ready writer, using scraps of paper for manuscript, and completing the story in a comparatively short time. It is matter of history how the authorship was anonymous, and how, when the manuscript was submitted to the publishers, it was rejected by one, returned unread by another, until, when the writer had almost ceased to concern herself about it, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, after holding it for a year, offered one hundred pounds for the copyright, thereby—the offer being accepted—making, as the sequel showed, a most lucky bargain for themselves. It has been said that the idea of writing "Mary Barton" came into the mind of Mrs. Gaskell, when in a workman's cottage, she was asked, by the occupant, whether she had ever seen a child clemmed to death. Anyhow from a motive quite as deep as that would have prompted, she set about telling her story. There is no doubt that it came from the very heart of her, and its earnestness is the secret of its power. The novelist, like the poet, broods over the phenomena of life, resolving these into dramatic conditions. Mrs. Gaskell, in a time of famine and distress, found herself confronted by social problems which demanded a solution. The political economists were studied, but it was evident to her that, apart from economic laws, relating to labour and capital, there was something grievously wrong in a state of things which permitted men, women, and children to starve. It was to her purpose also to draw attention to the contrasted conditions in the lives of rich and poor, the employers and the employed. Around this motive she grouped her figures and arranged her plot, and in the working out of it in "Mary Barton," you have, along with its love-making and tragic circumstances, a perfectly truthful reflection of the







MRS. GASKELL.

*From Block lent by Rev. Geo. A. Payne,*

*From Bas-relief by R. H. Watt,*



social conditions from which it was evolved. No other solution of a vexed economic problem is suggested than the recognition, by both masters and men of their mutual obligations, and the exercise of a large charity in their relations with each other. It is to this conclusion that Mr. Carson, the typical mill-owner of the book arrives after much personal suffering and mental striving.

To the present writer to read "*Mary Barton*," is to renew the scenes and associations of his youth. The book seems to blend itself with his early recollections. Familiar to the memory, in a period almost contemporaneous, is the Manchester of that time, and especially in those parts of it which form the theatre of action, and where the book was written. The streets and courts and alleys where many of the characters lived, the cotton mills in which they worked, are all there in the sombre background, with the disturbed conditions of the time making themselves evident to a child's mind in the conversation of his elders, and in a more objective way, in the sight, from an upper window, of a street filled with rioters, who, among the closed shops, selected for attack those where food was to be obtained. There is a vision too, of the efforts to quell these disturbances, and especially of a number of dragoons riding rapidly through the streets with drawn sabres.

To read the opening chapter of the book is to be reminded of a lost paradise. It is of a pastoral character and relates to Greenheys Fields, the playground of one's youth, where one first became conscious of "splendour in the grass, and glory in the flower." The favourite way thither lay along Greenheys Lane, past the house of Green Hay, with its parklike enclosures rich in memories of the childhood of De Quincey, then between suburban villas withdrawn within their garden spaces, with trees and shrubs in the

fences that blossomed gaily in the spring time, and so past the terrace where Geraldine Jewsbury lived, to the stile at the end of the lane, the first of many such leading from field to field as the pathway wound along to distant Hough End Clough, and beyond to the village of Withington.

Scattered about these fair pastures—afterwards to be known as "The Mary Barton Fields"—were old whitened farmhouses, and very familiar was that particular one which the novelist thus describes. "Close by it is a deep clear pond reflecting in its dark green depths the shadowy trees that bend over it to exclude the sun. The only place where the banks are shelving is on the side next to a rambling farmyard. The porch of the farmhouse is covered by a rose-tree, and the little garden surrounding it is crowded with a medley of old-fashioned herbs and flowers, planted long ago when the garden was the only druggist's shop within reach, and allowed to grow in scrambling and wild luxuriousness—rose, lavender, sage, balm (for tea), rosemary, pinks and wall-flowers, onions, and jessamine in most republican and indiscriminate order." Greenheys Lane, is now a stony-hearted street, and as for those fields and farmhouses, all, all, are gone the old familiar places. Some of the fields have been enclosed and transformed within the space known as Alexandra Park, and the builders have got hold of the rest, and have covered them with houses in multitudes, ranked out in long unlovely streets. I went one day to try to fix the locality of that farm house with its tree-shaded pond, and it was some comfort to find that, as far as one could trace it, the site is now part of a recreation ground destined to form a green oasis in a wilderness of bricks and mortar.

In those Greenheys fields Mrs. Gaskell introduces us, on a May evening, to some of the principal actors in the drama, to John Barton, the fateful figure of the book, Mary



Barton, his daughter, and others, but after this peaceful pastoral scene you are never more in these green fields again. When the friendly party wends its way townwards, to the Barton's house, we find that it is in a little paved court, narrow and confined, "having the backs of houses at the end opposite the opening, and a gutter running through the middle to carry off household slops, washing suds, etc." Such courts were common in those days, and even now remain not very far from where the story was written, but they are being destroyed, as occasion serves, and will never be permitted in the city's building plans again. The interior of the cottage, with its window drapery of blue and white check curtains, its geraniums in the broad ledges, its dresser, chest of drawers, and crowded furniture, and its cupboard of crockery, is described with a minuteness suggestive of that Dutch painting to which reference has already been made, as also is the tea-party which is given by the Barton's to their friends. Elsewhere in her description of the housing of the poor you are introduced to cellar dwellings, some of them squalid, insanitary and typhoid-generating, such as that in which the poor mill-hand, Ben Davenport starved with his wife and family, and which was the scene of his terrible death. The locality of it is fixed in the then crowded space between London Road and Ancoats, and there can be no doubt about the painful and truthful realism of the picture. Less revolting, but undesirable in its dampness, is the other underground place with its brick floor where dwelt Alice Wilson, who had been born among the breezy hills of Westmoreland, the good-hearted, helpful Alice, who to the occupation of nurse and washerwoman, added that of herbalist, and whose dim domicile was hung with all manner of hedgerow, ditch and field plants, gathered by herself, the spoils of surrounding fields. None of these cellar dwellings are permitted now-

a-days, and their abolition may be in part the result of the influence of Mrs. Gaskell's book.

How closely she had studied the working folk is constantly in evidence. She tells you of the working men botanists, and mathematicians, and in old Job Leigh, who helped to bring that baby from London, the enthusiastic naturalist, whose house was converted into a museum of curiosities of his own collecting, you have a type, with which Manchester men have become familiar. Among others of the more thoughtful working men she was intimate with Sam Bamford, whose poem "God help the poor" is used as an illuminating point in the story. Of all the descriptive passages in the book none to my mind is more terribly impressive than that which describes the meeting of the mill-workers at the "Weavers' Arms" in the bare room under the flaring gaslights where, as a result of a ballot which takes place in the darkness, John Barton finds himself the holder of the marked paper, which requires him to become the murderer of his master's son.

I have given so much space to "Mary Barton" that there is little or no room for dealing with "North and South" which did not appear until seven years later, and after "Cranford" and "Ruth" had been written. It also is an outcome of the Manchester influence, and in it Mrs. Gaskell returns to the relations of factory folk with their employers, but with a more mature experience. Here too, you have a great strike and its consequences, with the same comparisons and contrasts. The central female figure is Margaret Hale, the daughter of a Hampshire clergyman, who has given up his living on conscientious grounds and come North to earn his bread by taking in pupils for instruction. The typical manufacturer in this case is John Thornton, a younger man than Mr. Carson, strong-minded and resolute, but posses-

sed of good qualities, which, as the result of bitter experiences lead to a better understanding between himself and his workpeople, and to the establishment of wise and friendly relations. The love story is between Margaret Hale and John Thornton, and in the development of it there are also complicated misunderstandings of lengthened duration with a happy result in the end.

Among Mrs. Gaskell's short stories there is one which belongs to the Manchester series, so exquisitely beautiful in conception and artistic treatment, as to merit the term idyllic. It is "Libbie Marsh's Three Eras." It tells of a poor sempstress who had found a lodging in one of those pent-up courts with which we have become acquainted. On the first night of her residence there, from her bedroom window she sees reflected on the blind of an opposite window, the spectral shadow of a child's hand and arm, moving up and down, wearily, but restlessly, as if in pain. Sometimes this would cease for awhile, as if the child had fallen asleep, but presently the movement would be renewed suddenly, and the arm would be jerked upwards, as if in agony. On enquiry, she finds that the sufferer is the only son of a poor washerwoman, of termagant temper, but who is very tender and gentle to the little fellow, who, from some spinal mischief is obliged to lie there always and is left alone when his mother is out earning her livelihood. Fear of the mother's temper prevents any attempt at closer acquaintance, but, from her window-place, Libbie contrives to draw the child's attention, and to make a smiling acquaintance with him. One day she sees that his mother brings him some Michaelmas daisies, which are put into an old tea-pot, and Libbie sees how carefully they are tended, and how, when they begin to droop, they are preserved between the leaves of an old bible. For a long time her companionship

with the little fellow gets no farther than the sight of his face at the window in the day-time, and his shadow on the blind at night. When Valentine's day is approaching, which is her birthday, she resolves to screw out of her earnings, a half-guinea to buy a canary and cage for her little friend. The story of the purchase of that bird, with its description of Emanuel the barber and bird-dealer is worthy of Dickens. A bargain is struck for a canary called "Jupiter," a capital singer, and the caged bird is sent as a valentine to the crippled child, and at night the shadow on the blind shows her a little arm put fondly round the cage as if embracing it in sleep.

The next era is Whitsuntide, when, having got to know the mother and the child, she arranges to take both of them and the canary for a day's outing to Dunham Park, by the canal packet. Very truthful and lifelike is the description of the holiday-making of the Manchester working-folk of those days in the sylvan glades of that favourite resort. So delighted is the little cripple that he asks of Libbie, "Is Dunham like heaven? The people here are as kind as angels, and I don't want heaven to be more beautiful than this place." The third era is when Michaelmas daisies are in bloom again, and the story tells of the death of the little fellow, and how Libbie, to comfort the ill-tempered but broken-hearted widow, takes up her abode with her, and by a self-sacrificing and benign influence subdues the turbulent spirit to conditions of gentleness and peace.

Going back to "Mary Barton," it is not necessary to dwell in detail upon the effect of that novel on the reading world. It had been published anonymously, but when the writer became known there crowded around her a host of literary admirers, and also many hostile critics who assailed her in the manufacturers' or mill-owners' interests. Among her admirers were Carlyle, Ruskin,

Charles Kingsley, Landor, Jowett, Dean Stanley, and especially Dickens, who straightway enlisted her as a writer in "Household Words," where much of her subsequent work appeared. "Ruth" was written in response to this appeal, and is the story of a woman, greatly sinned against, one of the gentlest of her sex, who takes her punishment with such a patient humility, and endurance, as to induce for her not only our pity but our love. In some of the features of this story one is irresistibly reminded of Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter." In her delineation of "Ruth," Mrs. Gaskell displays

A bright  
And thorough-edged intellect, to part  
Error from crime.

Nothing is more characteristic too, than her exercise of a charity which hopeth all things and is kind. Like Thackeray she saw how, in human nature, things are mixed, and in the portrayal of a doubtful character she always shows the lights as well as the shadows. In this story, with scenery that changes from the Midlands to Wales, and finally to a northern town, you have reproduced, as in none other of her works, that dissenting life with which she was so familiar, associated in this case, with the old Unitarian Chapel already described, and especially with that most admirable pastor, Thurston Benson, and his sister, Faith, the protectors of the unfortunate Ruth.

In strange contrast with this book with its sombre colouring, its pathos, and deep undertone of sadness came "Cranford," written about the same time, and which revealed, unexpectedly, in the writer the existence of a most delicate and delightful humour. For the first time the Knutsford influence prevails, old scenes, associations and memories are revived. To turn from "Mary Barton" to

"Cranford" is to exchange the smoke and grime and sordid surroundings of a grim manufacturing town for the wholesome purity and breezy freshness of the old-fashioned country town with its pastoral accompaniments. You are carried back to a time of simplicity of life, when economy was always elegant. You are made familiar with conditions and customs now almost passed away; you become acquainted with delightful old maids, and at least one delightful old bachelor, you find yourself at evening card parties, where candles are the only means of illumination, and listen to most interesting gossip which goes on over the tea-cups. To such parties the ladies go in pattens, and with much stately ceremony, a sedan chair being sometimes used for more easy carriage. You are amused at the little comedies which are developed in this quaint society, and are now and then called upon, in a gentle, tearful way, to sympathise with sorrow and affliction. There is not much of a story in the book, but you are carried along with a sense of sweet serenity; it is "all so beautifully staid," that

You feel the safety of a hawthorn glade.

Then the figures too are all so individually attractive, and portrayed with such a delicacy of touch, their outward features, their foibles and eccentricities. You get on such friendly terms with them that you are sorry when some of them are withdrawn from the scene. You desire a longer acquaintance with Captain Brown, who preferred "Pickwick" to "Rasselas," and who grew so impatient at the praise lavished by Miss Jenkyns on the great Lexicographer, that—it was said—he was heard, in that lady's presence, to say, *sotto voce*, "D——n Dr. Johnson!" Mr. Holbrook too, the old bachelor yeoman who entertained the maiden ladies at his farmhouse at Woodley, where they sat in a

room with the shadows of the orchard trees playing within it, a room filled with books which lay on the ground, covered the walls and strewed the table, and who quoted his favourite poets to a fair companion as he walked about his fields; you regret that you have to part company with him so soon. Of all the ladies in the book, Miss Matilda Jenkyns, otherwise Miss Matty, is the dearest and gentlest; she survives to the end of the story, and you will be hard to please if you do not conceive for her a very tender attachment. Lord Houghton, writing of "Cranford" said that it was "the finest piece of humouristic description that had been added to British literature since Charles Lamb." However that may be there is at least one passage which is suggestive of Elia on his pathetic side as displayed in his "Dream Children," and it is associated in "Cranford" with Miss Matty, between whom and Mr. Holbrook there had once been a tender but a disappointed attachment. She is sitting in the firelight, talking to her young companion, the narrator, of past incidents in her life, to whom she says, "I never was ambitious, but I thought I could manage a house (my mother used to call me her right hand) and I was always so fond of little children—the shyest babies would stretch out their little arms to come to me; when I was a girl I was half my leisure time nursing in the neighbouring cottages; but I don't know how it was, when I grew sad and grave, which I did a year or two after this time—the little things drew back from me, and I am afraid I lost the knack, though I am just as fond of children as ever, and have a strange yearning at my heart; whenever I see a mother with a baby in her arms. Nay, my dear, (and by a sudden blaze which sprang up from a fall of the unstirred coals), I saw that her eyes were full of tears—gazing intently on some vision of what might have

been)—do you know I dream sometimes that I have a little child—always the same—a little girl of about two years old; she never grows older, though I have dreamt about her for many years. I don't think I ever dream of any words or sound she makes; she is very noiseless and still, but she comes to me when she is very sorry or very glad, and I have wakened with the clasp of her dear little arms around my neck. Only last night—perhaps because I had gone to sleep thinking of this ball for Phœbe—my little darling came in my dream and put up her mouth to be kissed, just as I have seen real babies do to real mothers before going to bed. But this is all nonsense, dear! only don't be frightened by Miss Pole from being married. I can fancy it may be a very happy state, and a little credulity helps one through life very smoothly—better than always doubting and doubting and seeing difficulties and disagreeables in everything.”

Around Knutsford, or Cranford, for the names seem interchangeable, Mrs. Gaskell has cast a charm which will remain. However much the actual place may change or lose its picturesque, old-world attractions, there will always be a Cranford of the imagination, which will have the atmosphere, surroundings, and people with which she has endowed it in her delightful book.

“Ruth” and “Cranford,” together with all the rest of her after work, are associated with the house in Plymouth Grove, to which, in 1850, the Gaskells removed. I must confess that, personally, the houses where famous authors have dwelt, and in which their books have found a birthplace are to me not as other houses, and I never pass this one in Plymouth Grove without thinking of the gracious lady who plied her pen there. It stands at the corner of Swinton Grove, and is a substantial building with stuccoed walls, showing classic touches in the ornamentation, and has a



pillared doorway. When the Gaskells went to live there the surroundings were much more attractive than they are now. The term "Grove," as applied, not only to the principal thoroughfare, but to several of its offshoots, was not inappropriate, for the roadways were bordered with carefully-kept greensward, and there was freshness in the foliage of the trees planted along them, and the gardens and orchards were places where flowers and fruit could be satisfactorily grown. From adjacent meadows too, in the early summer, came the scent of new-mown hay. There are no meadows now, though a few remnants of the open spaces are still uncovered with brick-work, and the house of the Gaskell's, still occupied by two daughters of the novelist, has its own enclosures, more or less green, with a few straggling trees about it, lingering evidences of the fairer time. The interior, in its furniture and appointments, its books and its pictures, is still reminiscent of our authoress, and one would fain hope, that in some way, that personal association may be perpetuated through the coming years, and never be separated from it. Here, during her lifetime, came many distinguished people, among whom may be named, Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Lord Houghton, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Charlotte Brontë. The writer of "*Jane Eyre*" is, for special reasons, one of the most interesting associations of the house. The frail figure of that shy, elusive genius seems to haunt the rooms. Here she came as a visitor on more than one occasion, and within its hospitable walls the friendship between the two novelists was strengthened. There was no spirit of envious rivalry between them; on the other hand, Charlotte Brontë withheld the publication of "*Villette*," so that it should not interfere with the reception of "*Ruth*." There are some interesting stories told of Miss Brontë's shyness during her

visit here, and I believe they still show the window drapery where Charlotte hid from her hostess and some callers, who were unaware of her presence in the room. By this friendship—began in the Lake country—a link was formed which closely connected the house in Plymouth Grove with the grey, old weather-beaten parsonage at Haworth, where the Brontë's lived. So did it come about that when Charlotte Brontë died, Mrs. Gaskell undertook to write her life, and a wonderful piece of biography it proved, ranking with the best in our literature, and destined, one thinks, along with "*Cranford*," to be the most abiding of her books. Mrs. Gaskell, however, discovered painfully, that the biographer's life is sometimes not a happy one. Though she thought she had exercised great care in its construction, the book gave grievous offence, not only to critics but to living people, who had been dealt with rather freely in its pages. The result was that she found herself in a veritable hornet's nest, escape from which was difficult and of slow accomplishment. In a second edition, matter to which objection had been taken was withdrawn. This was Mrs. Gaskell's first and last essay in biography. When she turned to fiction again she was in a safer and securer region. Only about nine years of life remained, but much important work was done in that space. In her immediate surroundings there was much, not only to engage her eye as an artist, but to enlist her warmest womanly sympathies. In 1862-3, occurred the great cotton famine, during which, in practical help, she behaved nobly, but no book resulted from that experience. When it was over she commenced to write "*Sylvia's Lovers*." The scene is Monkshaven, otherwise Whitby, and the story begins at the close of the previous century, and relates to the doings of the press gang, and their raids among the men engaged in the whale-fishing in the Greenland seas. Sylvia lives with her

parents at a farm house on the high lands above the town, and has two lovers, one dwelling in the town, and the other connected with the fishing service. The latter, and accepted lover, disappears mysteriously, and is regarded as dead, and the tragedy turns upon the suppression, by his rival, of the fact, of which he only has the knowledge, that the missing one has been taken by the press gang. By withholding this truth, and allowing Sylvia to consider her lover dead, he gains her hand, but when, sometime after the marriage, the lost man re-appears, there are direful consequences ending in separation. Sylvia's husband himself disappears, and it is only when he has returned after much wandering, and is dying in Monkshaven, that there is mutual reconciliation and forgiveness. The pervading tone of the book is as sombre as the moorlands that lie about Monkshaven, but the narrative is as picturesque as the town itself.

Of her more important stories the next in order is "Cousin Phillis," and here, in this exquisite idyll, we are at Heathbridge, otherwise Sandlebridge, and in that old house with its pastoral surroundings, we become acquainted with Cousin Phillis, that sweetest of Puritan maidens, cherishing in her tender, innocent heart, a secret love, which is doomed to the sorest disappointment, from the heartbreak of which she is doubtfully recovering when the story comes to an end. I have already referred to the possible identity of Phillis's father, Mr. Holman, with that of the novelist. There is one scene, where the farmer-minister engages in a religious exercise with his field-labourers, which ought not to be omitted here. After Mr. Holman had given out the psalm, "Come all harmonious tongues," to be sung to "Mount Ephraim" tune, the narrator tells how, "He lifted his spade in his hand and began to beat time with it. The two labourers seemed to know

both words and music, though I did not, and so did Phillis, her rich voice followed her father's, as he set the tune, and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence, but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny, stubble-fields from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried, a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing, blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene."

"Mr. Harrison's Confessions," a doctor's love story, and one of her best, belongs to this period, and also to the Cranford group. The atmosphere, the surroundings, the people, are all reminiscent of that charmed place. I refer to it because I desire to give an illustration of the novelist's word-painting in the description of an interior. It is a parlour in the vicarage, and the damsel Sophy referred to is the Vicar's daughter, and afterwards Mr. Harrison's wife. He says, "We descended a step, as I remember well ; for I was nearly falling down it, I was so caught with the picture within. It was like a picture—at least seen through the door-frame. A sort of mixture of crimson and sea-green in the room, and a sunny garden beyond, a very low casement-window, open to the amber air ; clusters of white roses peeping in, and Sophy sitting on a cushion on the ground, the light coming from above her head. . . . It looked so like a home that it at once made me know the full charm of the word. There were books and work about and tokens of employment ; there was a child's plaything on the floor ; and against the sea-green wall there hung a likeness or two done in water colours ; one I was

sure was that of Sophy's mother. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz, the same as the curtains—a little pretty red-rose on a white ground. I don't know where the crimson came from, but I am sure there was crimson somewhere, perhaps in the carpet. There was a glass door beside the window, and you went up a step into the garden. There was first a grass plot just under the windows, and, beyond that, straight gravel walks with box borders, and narrow flower beds on each side, most brilliant and gay at the end of August, as it was then, and behind the flower borders were fruit trees trained over woodwork, so as to shut out the beds of kitchen garden within."

There is a group of stories called "Round the Sofa," of which "My Lady Ludlow" is pre-eminently the best. In the delineation of the stately, little old-fashioned lady, with her high-heeled shoes, and gold-headed stick, who lived at Hanbury Court, and had been maid of honour to Queen Charlotte, we have a portrait which lingers in the memory. Lady Ludlow is worthy to mate with Sir Roger de Coverley. Like that knight, she reigned supreme in her own domain, which included the parish church and the parson. "While good old deaf Mr. Mountford lived, it was my lady's custom, when indisposed for a sermon to stand up at the door of her large square pew—just opposite the reading desk—and to say, (at that part of the morning service, where it is decreed that in choirs and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem); 'Mr. Mountford, I will not trouble you for a discourse this morning'; and we all knelt down to the Litany with great satisfaction, for Mr. Mountford, though he could not hear, had always his eyes open about this part of the service, for any of my lady's movements." My lady loved flowers, and had them in her rooms in rich profusion. She was learned

in the lore of them, and her much-read "Bacon's Essays" when handled carelessly fell apart at the "Essay on Gardens." She had a delicate taste in perfumè "the choice of odours was what my lady piqued herself upon, saying nothing showed birth like a keen susceptibility of smell." The odour of musk, in its animal origin, offended her, "attar of roses again she disliked, she said it reminded her of the city and merchant's wives, over-rich, over-heavy, in its perfume." Lavender and sweet woodruff, she was partial to; they reminded her of old customs, of cottage gardens, and woodland places. But most she prided herself upon the power of perceiving the delicious odour arising from a bed of dying strawberry leaves. Lord Bacon had drawn attention to this, and moreover it was a test of aristocratic derivation; common people could not perceive the odour, so she says "My dear, remember that you try if you can smell the scent of dying strawberry leaves in the next autumn."

It is in "My Lady Ludlow" that we are introduced to that delightful old maid, Miss Galindo, who may be thus introduced, "Miss Galindo was dressed in her best gown, I am sure, but I had never seen anything like it except in a picture, it was so old-fashioned. She wore a white muslin apron, delicately embroidered, and put on a little crookedly, in order, as she told us, even Lady Ludlow before the evening was over, to conceal a spot where the colour had been, discharged by a lemon-stain. This crookedness had an odd effect, especially when I saw that it was intentional; indeed, she was so anxious about her apron's right adjustment in the wrong place, that she told us straight out why she wore it so, and asked her ladyship if the spot was properly hidden, at the same time lifting up her apron, and showing her how large it was. 'When my father was alive,' she said, 'I always took his right arm

so, and used to remove any spotted or discoloured breadths to the left side, if it was a walking dress. That's the convenience of a gentleman. But widows and spinsters must do what they can.' " It was old-fashioned Miss Galindo who said of the young parson, "There he goes, clucking up children like an old hen, and trying to teach them about the salvation, and their souls, and I don't know what—things that it is just blasphemy to speak of out of church. And he potters old people about reading the Bible. I am sure I don't want to speak disrespectfully of the Holy Scriptures, but I found old Job Horton busy reading his Bible yesterday; says I, What are you reading, and where did you get it, and who gave it to you? So he made answer that he was reading Susannah and the Elders, for that he had read Bel and the Dragon, till he could pretty near say it off by heart, and they were two as pretty stories as ever he had read, and that it was a caution to him what bad old chaps there were in the world." Mrs. Gaskell's old maids are her humourists; conscious or unconscious, and the sombreness of "Ruth" is lit up by the sayings of Sally, the old servant in the minister's household, and especially when she tells of her sweet-hearts, and discourses on the duties of life.

Mrs. Gaskell's last great effort was "Wives and Daughters," which appeared in serial form, in the "Cornhill Magazine." It is described as "An everyday story," and the title is significant, because it indicates the field of work in which she excelled. Her genius, in its general aspect, has been truthfully described as homely in expression. Her men, women, and children, are such as you meet with in every day life. She does not deal with them as a sentimentalist, but sympathetically, the human heart is there directing the artistic pen. In "Wives and Daughters," she is again in her beloved

Knutsford, otherwise Hollingford, and displaying in her story artistic qualities of the most finished kind. In her gallery of female portraits none have been developed with finer touches than those of Molly and Cynthia. The story was never completed; when she was nearing the end of it, the end came unexpectedly for her. She was staying at Alton in Hampshire, in a house which she had purchased, as a surprise for her husband, and here, on a Sunday afternoon, in November, 1865, while she sat at the tea table, conversing with some of her family, suddenly

God's finger touched her and she slept.

She is buried at Knutsford on the green slope of the graveyard of the Unitarian Chapel, and no more fitting place could have been chosen. In death as in life, she is for ever associated with "Cranford." What may be an author's fate in the years to come, is a matter of speculation, but the books which appeal to the universal human heart, must be the longest survivors, and "Cranford" is one of these. Of the people in this book, the most delightful, as I have said, is Miss Matty Jenkyns, and in creating her, Mrs. Gaskell has gone deeper than any artistic purpose merely, and has established between herself and her readers a bond of affectionate and intimate companionship, and so, in regard to her, as a novelist, one may adapt some closing words of "Cranford," which were applied to Miss Matty, and say that we all love Mrs. Gaskell, and somehow think that we are all the better when we are brought under her influence.





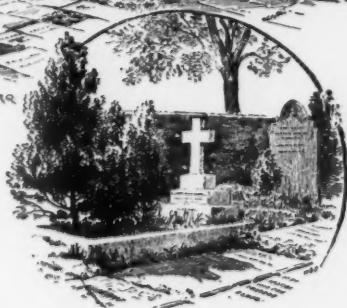






BROOK STREET CHAPEL,  
KNUTSFORD.

*From Block lent by  
Rev. Geo. A. Payne.*



MRS. GASKELL'S GRAVE.





## SYMBOL AND ALLEGORY IN SPENSER.

BY WALTER BUTTERWORTH.

**A**LLEGORY plays an important part in the "Faery Queen." Spenser in poetry with Bunyan in prose, stand clear away from all comparison as masters of this style of writing in English literature. By its means Spenser expressed many of his most earnest meditations, his most recurrent thoughts; and a study of his symbols will be found to reveal the leading features of his philosophy of life. It would be interesting, though temporarily bewildering, to connote the pronouncements of various critics upon this subject. Let us, by way of preface, quote a few:

"No one," said Coleridge, "can appreciate Spenser without some reflection on the nature of allegorical writing." Contrast Hazlitt: "Some people say that all this may be very fine, but they cannot understand it on account of the allegory. They are afraid of the allegory, as if they thought it would bite them; they look at it as a child looks at a painted dragon, and think it will strangle them in its shining folds. This is very idle. If they do not meddle with the allegory, the allegory will not meddle with them. Without minding it at all, the whole is as plain as a pike-staff."

It is a curious fact that the brilliant Hazlitt fell far short of justice in his estimate of Spenser, as of his friend Sir Philip Sydney. He thought Spenser's "poetical temperament as effeminate as Chaucer's was stern and masculine—that he gave himself up to the unrestrained indulgence of flowery tenderness—the love of beauty, not of truth, was the moving principle of his mind; he was guided in his fantastic delineations by no rule but the impulse of an inexhaustible imagination." Commenting upon Southey's lines :

Yet not more sweet  
Than pure was he, and not more pure than wise,  
High priest of all the muse's mysteries.

He says : " On the contrary, no one was more apt to pry into mysteries which do not strictly belong to the muses." But this critic partly made amends by some delightful appreciations, and even upon our particular subject he concluded : " There is an originality, richness and variety in his allegorical personages and fictions, which almost vies with the splendour of the ancient mythology."

Lowell thought " we might fairly leave on one side" the allegory of the " Faery Queen." On the other hand, Ruskin, Henry Morley, Craik, Kitchen, Grosart, Dowden, Church, and many others insist upon its high importance as conveying the message of the poet's very soul.

Leaving, then, these clashing opinions, let us examine for ourselves some of the aspects of Spenser and his allegory. I do not propose to trace it from canto to canto, as it runs in leash with the narrative, through the six books. This has been done with the utmost care by Henry Morley, in his "English Writers," and, as regards the first book, by Ruskin, in an appendix to his "Stones of Venice." Even in Ruskin's hands, it is a dull business, as labelling generally

is. We will take their interpretations as trustworthy, and confine ourselves to the leading thoughts they convey.

How came Spenser to use this vehicle of expression? It was and had long been popular in Italy, Spain, France, and England. If we blot out all literature from Shakespeare onwards there is a startling contrast with our own days. The revival of learning had discovered the treasures of classic Greece and Rome; but, apart from them, only one very great name in English literature, Chaucer, stirred men's hearts. Italy already had produced a brilliant series of writers; she led the van in literary movements, followed by France and Spain and Portugal. Throughout, allegory had become a favourite mode of expression, influenced most of all by Dante's "*Divina Commedia*" in Italy and the "*Romaunt of the Rose*" in France. This last enjoyed enormous popularity. It expressed the thought of the times in images which had become familiar to the popular mind, partly, perhaps, through the theological habit of "presenting the seven deadly sins and other abstractions as entities."

In England the most famous examples of this class before Spenser were: Langland's "*Piers Ploughman*," Chaucer's "*House of Fame*," Hawes' "*Pastime of Pleasure*," and Lydgate's "*Temple of Glass*." Mrs. Browning referred to them as: "The four columnar marbles, the four allegorical poems, on whose foundations is exalted into light the great allegorical poem of the world, Spenser's "*Faery Queen*." This is strikingly expressed, but is, I think, only true so far as it states the fact that these four poems in English preceded the "*Faery Queen*." They are in many ways extremely different and essentially removed from the "*Faery Queen*," while as regards the original impulse, the "*Romaunt of the Rose*" was probably more popular than all of them put together, Spenser's included.

Turning to the general scheme of the "Faery Queen," Spenser explains it in his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, beginning: "Sir, knowing how doubtfully all allegories may be construed, and this book of mine, which I have entituled the "Faery Queen," being a continued allegory, or darke conceit, I have thought it good, to discover unto you the generall intention and meaning; the generall end, therefore, of all the Booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline."

He proceeds to explain that by "Faery Queen" he means Glory in general and Queen Elizabeth in particular, by Prince Arthur magnificence (or magnanimity). The "Faery Queen kept her annuall feast of twelve days; upon which twelve severall days, the occasions of the twelve severall adventures happened, which, being undertaken by twelve severall knights, are in these twelve bookes severally handled and discoursed."

Each of these adventures is conducted by a knight who represents one of the moral virtues, striving towards perfection, and aided at critical moments by Divine Grace (Prince Arthur). The poet lived to accomplish only half of his project, the first six books and a fragment. These may be thus tabulated: "The Legend of Holiness—Knight of the Red Cross—Purity of Mind or Fidelity to God in Soul"; "The Legend of Temperance—Sir Guyon—Purity of Body or Fidelity to God in Body"; "The Legend of Chastity—Britomartis—Love Between Man and Woman, Bond of Love"; "The Legend of Friendship—Cambel and Triamond—Love Between Man and Man, Bond of Love"; "The Legend of Justice—Artegall—Love Between Man and Man, Bond of Justice"; "The Legend of Courtesie—Sir Calidore—Love Between Man and Man, Bond of Good Manners"; and the fragment, "Constansie." Had the twelve books



been completed they would have constituted an allegory of man perfecting all his faculties in the fight on earth for heaven, or the struggle of the human soul towards light and emancipation.

Often the allegory, as in the greatest poem of this kind, the "*Divina Commedia*," is at once abstract, spiritual and personal, the stories having a keen contemporary interest through the characters representing great personages of the day—the Queen, her counsellors, courtiers, adventurers, and rivals.

Leaving all this aside, leaving aside also the details of the stories, in what way does the man, Edmund Spenser, reveal what is in him, through these writings, "clowdily enwrapped in allegoricall devises," to use his own phrase? Of his outward life, not very much is known, considering the fame he at once acquired. But here, in his poem, is the very man, his thoughts, his aspirations, his deep convictions. As with many other poets, his habit was to make his great work the repository of his vital experiences. "Whoso," says Philpot, "will get behind the visionary shapes of his creation, will find himself in presence of tragic realities. Penetrate his parable of 'Duessa and Una,' 'Sir Guyon and Acrasia,' 'Artigall,' 'Radegund,' 'Britomart,' and the rest, and we shall discover Edmund Spenser and every other earnest man fighting on his own account, with principalities and powers, the great battle of the soul."

He aims at presenting perfection of human character, largely through allegory, parable, simile, type, personification. Ideal manliness, that is his theme. His knights must withstand trials, must rise again if they fall, must serve, obey, possess their souls in patience. And in presenting all this, he tells us what he, personally, loved and what he hated. Note, for instance, his description of the vices which draw the chariot of *Lucifera*, or *Pride*. "Idle-

nesse comes first, upon an ass ; he lives in "lawlesse riotise," a shaking fever racks his "lustlesse limbs," and his life is a shunning of all duties.

And by his side rode loathsome gluttony,  
Deformed creature, on a filthy swine,  
His belly was upblown with luxury,  
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne :  
And, like a crane, his neck was long and fine,  
With which he swallowed up excessive feast,  
For want whereof poor people oft did pyne :  
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,  
He spued up his gorge, that all him did detest.

Then come Lechery, Avarice,

Whose wealth was want, whose plenty made him poor,  
Who, both from back and belly, still did spare.

And next to him malicious envy rode  
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw  
Between his cankered teeth a venomous tode,  
That all the poison ran about his jaw ;  
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw  
At neighbours' wealth, that made him ever sad,  
For deth it was, when any good he saw ;  
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had ;  
And when he heard of harme, he wexed wondrous glad,

And in his bosome secretly, there lay an hateful snake.

Then comes Wrath upon a lion, "Trembling through hasty rage, when choler in him swelled." Finally Sathan, "With smarting whip."

I cannot resist quoting Ruskin upon Spenser's "Maleger. The passage eloquently demonstrates the poet's wealth of imagery and symbol, whilst it incidentally illustrates Ruskin's own fervour, analytical power and intellectual sympathy :

In completeness of personification no one can approach him. Not

even in Dante do I remember anything quite so great as the description of the Captain of the Lusts of the Flesh.

As pale and wan as ashes was his looke;  
 His body leane and meagre as a rake;  
 And skin all withered as a dried rooke;  
 Thereto as cold and drery as a snake;  
 That seemed to tremble evermore and quake;  
 All in a canvas thin he was bedight,  
 And girded with a belt of twisted brake,  
 Upon his head he wore an helmet light,  
 Made of a dead man's skull.

He rides upon a tiger, and in his hand is a bow, bent,

And many arrows under his right side,  
 Headed with flint and fethers bloody died.

The horror and truth of this are beyond anything that I know, out of the pages of inspiration. Note the heading of the arrows with flint, because sharper and more subtle in the edge than steel, and because steel might consume away with rust, but flint not; and consider in the whole description how the wasting away of body and soul together, and the coldness of the heart which unholy fire has consumed into ashes, and the loss of all power, and the kindling of all terrible impatience, and the implanting of thorny and inextricable griefs are set forth by the various images, the belt of brake, the tiger steed and the light helmet, girding the head with death.

Ruskin was deeply interested in Spenser's personifications, which he regarded as "expressed to all future ages in a consummate manner in the poem of Spenser's." But he considered this figure as much inferior to symbol. Spenser, it seems to me, frequently combines the two; clearly in the instances cited, the ass, the wolf, the snake, the tiger, the belt of twisted brake, and the skull are symbols.

In the second volume of his "Stones of Venice," Ruskin compares minutely the symbolic sculptures of San Marco with the poetic symbols of Dante and Spenser of the same subjects. Of systems of virtues, from Aristotle down-

wards, he remarks : " The most noble in literature, are, I suppose, those of Dante and Spenser."

Spenser avowedly followed Ariosto in framing his "Faery Queen." From him he copied the enchanted forest, the heroic verse, the knightly encounters, the magic and witchcraft, the monsters. From him also many time-honoured ornaments of verse, including the deliberate simile, of which Mr. Elton says Spenser uses one hundred and fifty. From him comes the involved plot. But where Ariosto is gay, brilliant, debonnair, Spenser is grave and earnest. He is more akin to Tasso, whose "*Gerusalemme Liberata*" had recently been published, and to whom, also, he was much indebted. Like Tasso, he was a pensive dreamer, delighting in chivalry, serious-minded, keenly alive to beauty in every form, yet pure and of exquisite courtesy.

The feature of the "Faery Queen," which lifts it quite away from the "*Orlando Furioso*," is the band of knights in whom Spenser illustrated the virtues of manliness according to Elizabethan ideals. He had been in close personal touch with some of the noblest men, and much of the noblest thought of England. Sidney, Raleigh, Lord Grey were his friends. Hooker, Bacon, Shakespeare were writing even then. England was on fire with enthusiasm for great achievements in religion, patriotism, letters, discovery, conquest. Listen to the dying words of a rough fighter like Sir Richard Grenville : "Here die I with a joyfull and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, that hath fought for his country, Queen, religion and honour, whereby my soull most joyfull departeth out of this bodie, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier, that hath done his dutie as he was bound to do."

With this spirit abroad, imagine the effect upon Spenser's life and work when that picturesque figure, Sir Walter

Raleigh, moved across his path. Sir Philip Sidney helped posthumously to mould and inspire the "Faery Queen." With such examples before him Spenser created his typical knights, who go forth in the service of God, succouring the defenceless, championing the weak, redressing wrongs, overthrowing the powers of evil.

The noble hart that harbours virtuous thought,  
And is with child of glorious great intent,  
Can never rest until it forth have brought,  
Th' eternal brood of glory excellent.

The poet takes as a pattern the fabled golden age:—

O! goodly usage of those antique tymes,  
In which the sword was servaunt unto right;  
When not for malice and contentious crymes,  
But all for prayse and proof of manly might,  
The martial brood accustomed to fight:  
Then honour was a meed of victory,  
And yet the vanquished had no despight.  
Let later age that noble use envy,  
Vile rancour to avoid and cruel surquedry.

So we find the Red Cross Knight turning his keen sword against Error, "most lothsom, filthy, foule"; against Unbelief, and that old dragon, the monstrous enemy of truth. For a time he is the victim of Deceit, of gross Pride and of Despair but in the end is purified and conquers. Sir Guyon, the champion of Temperance, repelling violence, light folly, excess, sensuality, wordly ambition, and the temptations of Mammon. The poet pours out his scorn upon him who

Makes his God of his ungodly pelf.

Sir Guyon exclaims :

Regard of worldly mucke doth fowly blend,  
And low abuse the high heroicke spright,  
That joyes for crownes and kingdomes to contend :

Faire shields, gay steedes, bright armes be my delight;  
Those be the riches fit for an advent'rous knight.

and again

All otherwise, saide he, I riches read,  
And deeme them roote of all disquietnesse;  
First got with guile and then preserved with dread,  
And after spent with pride and lavishnesse,  
Leaving behind them grief and heavinesse:  
Infinite mischiefes of them doe arize,  
Strife and debate, bloodshed and bitternesse,  
Outrageous wrong, and hellish covetize,  
That noble heart as great dishonour doth despize.

Space fails me to tell of each of these knights, fighting the good fight against his fated enemies. After the second canto the allegory becomes less lucid, the poet's fancy less sternly bridled. But Britomart, Artegall, and Calidore are drawn with marvellous skill, resource, and picturesqueness, and the allegory underlying their adventures, though often interrupted and sometimes confused, is richly and nobly true to the laws underlying our life.

I must turn for a few moments to Spenser's women-creations, generally an infallible test of a poet's own temper. In Spenser, as in Tasso, women hold an important and interesting place in the poem. Una, Britomartis, Florimell, Pastorella, Belphebe, Amoret are delightful and singularly pure creations, against whom may be contrasted the false Duessa, the wanton Hellenore, and all the mythical and symbolical figures, "In chaines of lust and lewde desires ybounde."

Some of Spenser's admirers have been disturbed by certain ardent and seductive scenes, as that Arcadian one where "An hundred naked maidens lilly white danced the hours away." Or the "Bower of Bliss," with its "naked Damzelles" bathing,

The whiles some one did chant this lovely lay,  
 Ah! see, whoso fayre thing doest faine to see,  
 In springing flowers the image of thy day.  
 Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly shee  
 Doth first peepe forth with bashful modestee,  
 That fairer seemes the lesse ye see her may.  
 Lo! see soone after how more bold and free  
 Her bared bosome she doth broad display;  
 Lo! see soone after how she fades and falls away.

So passeth, in the passing of a day,  
 Of mortall life and leafe, the bud, and flowre;  
 Ne more doth florish after first decay,  
 That earst was sought to deck both bed and bowre  
 Of many a lady, and many a paramowre.  
 Gather, therefore, the rose whilst yet is prime,  
 For soone comes age that will her pride deflowre;  
 Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,  
 Whilst loving thou mayst loved be with equall crime.

For myself, I cannot understand how these lovely pictures can suggest evil. They are positive evidence of the poet's freedom from impure ideas. Beauty in all forms haunted his mind; it was with him a veritable passion. It may be that in common with most renaissance writers his insistence upon the beauty of the body is too free for many moderns. It must also be remembered that he had to describe the temptations of the flesh, and when his allegory caught fire, it glowed with the warmth of imagination. But the scenes in question seem to me to have presented themselves to the poet, as they might to a painter or a sculptor, purified from all lustful associations.

However, that may be, his Britomart, Una, Bellphœbe, Pastorella, Florimell are lovely and pure indeed. Excepting the first they are simple, idyllic, having no complexity of character. But we would not have it otherwise, for they share the ineffable graces of Shakespeare's Perdita, or Desdemona, or Hero or Miranda.

Says Dowden : " Beauty, Spenser maintained, is two-fold. There is beauty which is a mere pasture to the eye ; it is a spoil for which we grow greedy—and there is the higher beauty of which the peculiar quality is a penetrating radiance. It illuminates all that comes into its presence ; it is a beam from the divine fount of light. For Spenser behind each woman made to worship or love, rises a sacred presence—womanhood itself."

In Woman, as in all beautiful things, Spenser saw symbols of

That beauty, which was made to represent  
The great Creator's own resemblance bright.

There can be little doubt that Spenser is read by comparatively few. The great reading multitude pass him by, intent on things of the hour ; the sensational, or the tawdry and shallow, or the merely material. Worse and more significant, even lovers of letters often leave him in cold neglect. The man who has read the whole of the " Faery Queen " is nowadays a *rara avis*.

Yet the best judges have acclaimed Spenser, with rare unanimity, from Shakespeare to our days. In the " *Passionate Pilgrim* " we read :

Spenser, to me, whose deep conceit is such  
As passing all conceit, needs no defence.  
Thou lov'st to hear the sweet, melodious sound  
That Phœbus' lute, the queen of music, makes  
And I, in deep delight, am deeply drowned,  
Whenas himself to singing he betakes.

Milton proclaimed himself the scholar of " our sage and serious Spenser, whom I dare to name a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas," and refers to the " *Faery Queen* " :

Of tourneys and of tropheys hung,  
Of forests and enchantments drear,  
Where more is meant than meets the ear.



So many of our poets have added their voices to the pæan of praise that "the poets' poet" has long been Spenser's peculiar description. He is not less the artists' poet, the poet of beauty, of imagination, of nobility of thought. Why, then, is his popularity so restricted, constant as it remains, while more vulgar idols are set up and knocked down again as if the world were an auction-room?

Possibly the reply to this question is germane to our subject. Spenser's lofty outlook upon life, his rarefied atmosphere, his fine workmanship, all perhaps place him somewhat out of the reach of the general public. But, beside this, and more significant, is that peculiar remoteness, which may in part be due to his habit of allegorising. All feel this remoteness. To some it possesses a special charm. But they are relatively few. If it were only remoteness in subject, that would be no bar to popularity. It is not alone in subject, but in language, in method, in expression, in spirit. The poet deliberately chose to use archaic language. His favourite literary conventions were the pastoral, the heroic, and the allegorical. All these have had their vogue, and the children of many a subsequent generation have nodded and yawned over books which were wont to thrill. Gone is the taste for allegory, in extended poetic form; gone are the days of chivalry, in the mediæval manner; gone the relish for heroics, for enchantments, for pastoral, and, indeed, the last was ever a mere literary convention, having nought whatever to do with the agricultural labourer, at least in northern counties.

Doubtless Spenser's allegorising must bear a share of the responsibility for alienating him from the average, and even the exceptional reader. Noble as it is in the main, it is dull at times, when the abstractions become bare of fancy, the symbols frigid exercises of ingenuity, the personifications a mere mechanical habit of expression. The

figures, for instance of Diet, Concoction, and Digestion are quite devoid of warmth of poetic feeling. Or again, those in the House of Coelia.

The pastoral cantos also are allegorical, though perhaps generally not so regarded. Here we are more remote than ever from reality, the whole convention having long been a make-believe, a titillation of the fancy; it was still the fashion to pipe of amorous shepherds and shepherdesses, their flocks, the passing seasons, scenes of peace and simplicity, though not without elements of unhappiness. These figured a world in microcosm, and were considered the emblems of human experience. In Spenser, at least, they were a fabric in which were woven strands of contemporary life, and so had a freshness for the readers of his time.

Further, his habit of presenting certain abstract qualities in concrete form, under personalities, sometimes gave to these an air of unreality. No blood ran in their veins. They were like the false Florimell, created by magic, not nature's own sweet work. Then it is that his phantom knights his visionary women, his "monstere most deforme," his "salvage men"—wild men o' the woods—and the fantastic region which he thus peopled are remote indeed from the actualities of the life we lead.

Whatever the causes of the general neglect of Spenser, it is deeply to be regretted. Sir Philip Sidney observed: "Poetry best advances the end of all earthly learning—virtuous action," and this was the end Spenser had in view. He loved the good, the true, the beautiful. His mind was naturally exalted, serious, of remarkable refinement and delicacy. All this finds ample expression in the rich music of his verse. If ever a poem was wrought of high-souled ideals, it is the "Faery Queen." Mr. William Rossetti remarked that it stands alone of very great poems, beside the "Divina Commedia" in taking the illustration of spiritual

virtue for its direct theme. Like Dante, Spenser summed up a great period and opened out a new era. As one of his commentators says : "None can ever again make a great poem to match this, for its graces are bound up with much that would no longer be natural and is quite beyond imitation."

Reference to the exceeding beauty, from many points of view, of this great poem, has been avoided. My subject is unmanageable, in so short a space as it is. But this may be said, in conclusion. Spenser gave us a work to rank, in nearly all rhetorical qualities, equal with those of his exemplars, Ariosto and Tasso. On the ethical side, he is much their superior. The "Faery Queen" finds its place, not only among the great poems of the world, but still more emphatically, among those highest monuments, of the human mind, which have made for purity, honour, and right-doing among men, and teach us to

Looke at last up to that soveraine light,  
From whose pure beams all perfect beauty springs,  
That kindleth love in every godly spright,  
Even the love of God.





## HYDRINGTON PROSECUTION SOCIETY.

By J. E. CRAVEN.

THERE was a time when felonies and misdemeanours were committed under more favourable conditions than they are to-day. That was before the formation of the Hydrington Prosecution Society.

Before that Society started, if a man had a gift in the way of felony or misdemeanour, he could cultivate his genius with little risk of detection, and less risk of punishment. There was then some encouragement for an enterprising law breaker. Besides the spoils of villany, there was an element of romance and supposed heroism about it that is now wanting. Robin Hood and Dick Turpin still live in the minds of young adventurous people, who have wrong ideals and false notions of glory.

We have many imitators of Jabez Balfour, yet it is not that he is deified, but because his methods seem most likely to succeed. His offences were the outcome of changed conditions of society. His was not the old policy of "stand and deliver." His victims were fond of money and large rates of interest, and without resistance, much less alarm, they went smiling into the trap, and ultimately everybody

was punished. Fashions in crime vary, and are suggested by changes in Society, as attacks in warfare are suggested by the enemy's vulnerability and his unguardedness.

Some people have a preference or weakness for a particular kind of crime. I knew a case of a young man whose weakness was robbing hen-cotes, and who, so far as I have heard, was perfectly honest in the face of any other temptation. He was a specialist in fowls and hen-cotes. He was not a well-educated man, notwithstanding many enforced lessons and a great deal of detention (for he was often imprisoned) otherwise it might have been said of him, as a Country Magistrate once said to a prisoner, "You had a good education and a careful bringing up, instead of which you go about robbing hen-cotes."

The old Parish Constable was a man whose importance was as big as the area he had to protect, and what his presence did not do, his reputation had to supply. The old Parish Constable was looked upon, by lads at least, as something more than a man,—he was an army, ready to detect, surround, and capture. As boys we were in awe of him. We never knew whether he knew of our last trespass across mowing meadows, or the pockets-full of apples that we had recently taken out of the orchard. He might have been plague-stricken, for as he walked along the street, tender-conscienced lads slunk away from him, and turned round to watch him get out of sight. He had special places of call, where he thought it likely he could get useful information. The Inn near the Church no doubt abundantly justified the importance he attached to it as a place for such a purpose.

Some terrible shindies took place in Hydrington fifty or sixty years ago, about the appointment of Parish Constables. Before "Home Rule" was ever mentioned for Ireland, it was claimed for Hydrington. The Poor Law

Guardians resisted as being unnecessary for Hydrington, and inconsistent with Home Rule, and riots took place and windows were smashed. Hydrington was about the last Union in the country to supply itself with a Workhouse, and this was supplied after many riots and disturbances and a threat by the Authorities to dissolve the Union.

There was a strong party feeling in Hydrington in favour of the people appointing their own Constables. A public meeting was held in 1854, at which many influential people attended, and a Memorial was adopted for presentation to the Magistrates in Petty Sessions. Clause No. 1 of the Memorial states:—

“Your Memorialists find that the persons recommended by Vestry Meetings, as considered by the Ratepayers most suitable to fill the office of Parish Constable, have been systematically set aside, and many busy, meddling, and officious persons have been appointed in their stead.”

At this Meeting one speaker gave the following instance to prove the unfitness of a Constable appointed by the Magistrates:—

“Three quarters of a year ago a chimney sweep was employed to sweep a chimney. He sent a lad up the chimney, who stayed there too long. A young man, in climbing to the top of the house outside to rescue the lad, unfortunately fell and fractured his skull. The master-sweep was desirous of doing all he could, and was about to take him to an inn, and had sent for a doctor. The Constable then interfered, and said the chimney-sweep was doing an illegal act, as he had no right to permit a person under 21 to climb a chimney. He would, therefore, have him before a Magistrate, and would let him do nothing with the wounded man. The Constable took him (the wounded man) to an Inn, where he was not washed or *anything*, and on the third day he died.”

Lest this instance should not be absolutely conclusive,

the meeting had its feelings wrought upon also by another speaker, who tried to show how unsuitable were the Constables appointed by the Magistrates. This speaker spoke as follows:—

“A man named Whitehead was said to have given something to procure abortion. Constable Tonnick immediately secured the offender, who was brought before the Hydrington Bench and committed for trial to the Sessions. The Constable produced a bottle of stuff which was said to have been offered to the woman, but which she had not taken, and which Dr. Kindman said he would drink for sixpence. It would not do to go to Quarter Sessions with such a case as that, and the Constable went to a chemist in Leeds to get better evidence, but with no better success. The man was acquitted.”

The Doctor, no doubt, knew he would not run the same risks as the woman, and might drink the decoction with comparative impunity.

As another instance of this Constable's depravity, the speaker went on to say:—

“A poor fellow was killed. This active Officer serves the summons on the Jury and orders some lamb (at the Inn where the inquest was to be held) saying ‘It was an ill wind which brings nobody good. I should have had no lamb to-day if the man had not gone dead.’”

The fees charged by the Magistrates' Clerk were also strongly complained of. So it appears that even then Lawyers were not sufficiently appreciated. All this was supposed to arise from the Vestry not appointing the Parish Constables. The meeting was a very serious and earnest one. Great principles were at stake. One speaker at this meeting said “he saw many persons absent,” but did not explain how he managed it.

The Chairman, in his opening speech, quoted King Alfred, who had, he said, told his people that he would be

King over them but that they should govern themselves. He, the Chairman, also gave a long quotation from Judge Blackstone on standing armies, and said that the Rural Police (to which he was opposed) resembled all the features of a standing army, not being under the control of the people.

Happily all these constitutional dangers have passed, and the Police have not upset the British Constitution. But the old prejudice against them lingered a long time in Hydrington. I remember one time when we had to hide a policeman amongst the spectators on the cricket field, being afraid of offending the susceptibilities of our landlord.

By an Act of Parliament passed under the government of Sir Robert Peel, the old petty Parish Constable was abolished, and the County Police instituted. The policeman was called a "Bobby" or a "Peeler" after Sir Robert. Many old Parish Constables were made into Policemen, and when clothed in their new uniform they were a very motley lot. I remember one energetic little chap who was known as "Jack o' Marks." His legs were very much bowed, and as a printer remarked, he seemed to be upheld by an empty parenthesis. His gait was peculiar and suggested to you that he was trying to shed his legs alternately. Jack o' Marks, in his uniform, amongst a squad of younger trained men, looked very distinguished—but in the lawyer's sense of being very different. At drill you could never tell which way he was going to turn, and for a second you feared he was going to mutiny and defy his superior officer's word of command by giving it an opposite rendering. Another old Parish Constable became an Inspector in the new police, and was so undisciplined and unmilitary as to confess that he was liable to an ordinary civilian's ailments, such as sore throat and rheumatism. It was an object lesson to lads to find that the Inspector, with all his past



Parish glory, and his eminence in the new police, could be subject to ordinary human infirmities. We never regarded him as mortal, except in the case of sudden attack by at least twenty picked and fully armed enemies of his country,—and when at last his health broke down, and he walked with a limp, we regarded it as a consequence of the New System, which took a Parish Constable out of his natural surroundings. I remember under the old System being sent into Lodging-houses, etc., on all sorts of excuses, to see if I could identify a man as the one I had seen loitering near a house where a burglary had been committed. This gave me for a time eminence among my play-mates, and I felt that I had incurred the risks and shared the glory of the Parish Constable.

The Parish Constable's claim of knowledge of law was very profound—the actual knowledge very elementary and very inaccurate. "Burn's Justice" was his classic, that was the familiar reference to Burn's "Justice of the Peace," a pretentious work in four volumes. Still, whatever was the Constable's knowledge of law, it was usually beyond contradiction and question, and he was reputed to be only amenable to a mandamus. But what that was we had no definite idea, except that it was a concentrated form and essence of the British Power and Constitution, which was specially necessary to produce effects on a Parish Constable. One poor woman was about to take a long journey into Kent to enquire about a relative, and she consulted the encyclopædic Parish Constable, who told her to go and ask for "Mr. Dawson, who was the Executor for the whole of Kent."

Well might Blackstone say of the Constables "they were armed with very large powers of arresting and imprisoning, of breaking open houses and the like, of the extent of which powers, considering what manner of men are, for the

most part, put into these offices, it is perhaps very well that they are generally kept in ignorance."

Parish Constable Joe Heaton, in the day I knew him, was getting old, had already got bulky, and probably was not able to fight or flee. But his knowledge of law was his comfort; he was never weary of explaining how it was the duty of civilians to come to the help of a constable in any fray or fight, even if the civilian got sorely wounded or killed for his pains, and that no loyal citizen should hesitate to give, if necessary, his life in the protection of a Constable, which would be a noble form of shedding his blood for his king and country, and be but the discharge of an important duty.

The Parish Constable was a man of strategy. It was expected, that on a certain night, Hydrington Hall was to be picked into by thieves. The Constable, Mound, got four or five young men to help him, and having pretty well drilled them into his plans and their duties, he placed one man under a tree, and taking the others away, told the man to remain under the tree. But the young man was apprehensive when he found he was to be left alone, and said to the Constable "Here, supposing one of the burglars comes and kills me with a revolver?" "Oh!" replied the Constable, "Never mind, it will be all right, I shall be somewhere about." No doubt this was assuring.

The same Constable once told me that he possessed a remarkable stick, which rebounded from the object it struck without injuring it, but had very serious effects upon anything it came in contact with on its rebound. He told me he had once to arrest a very desperate Irishman named Kelly, who was stood talking to another named Murphy. The Constable got between them, and at once struck Kelly three blows on the head with his stick, which rebounded without doing Kelly any injury, but the stick rebounded on

to Murphy's head, and did him a deal of harm. I said "Why did you not let go of Kelly and strike Murphy?" He said "That is just what I did and I soon had Kelly on the floor with the hand-cuffs on."

The abolition of the Parish Stocks ushered in quite a revolution in parish affairs. The Stocks were the outward and visual representation of the majesty of the law. When they went into disuse, the Parish Constable waned as a terrifying power. The Constable never seemed to be prouder than when he had got the prisoner's ankles safely locked. This was usually done in the presence of curious men and women, and highly interested boys. When the prisoner was duly fastened, the Constable usually gazed round, flushed with importance, and looked as proud as George Stephenson when he gazed on his first locomotive.

When the Constable had gone away, we boys still stood round staring at the prisoner. Those were high moments of philosophy. The prisoner's feelings can only be imagined, but they probably alternated between vengeance, penitence, and reformation.

To us lads, the scene suggested reflections on the possibilities of the human race. It is the errors, calamities, and sufferings of life that largely make us philosophers. In the presence of those, our conclusions are most earnest and sincere, but, unfortunately, not always the most durable. The difference between error and rectitude appears more marked in a gaol or the stocks, than in a church or a railway carriage.

The Stocks became unpopular and fell into disuse. Much might be said against them, but this I will say, for them, that I never knew a prisoner in the Stocks who did not squarely face his punishment. The feet that had been quick to do evil, were placed under most restraint and temporarily banished from the owner's observation.

The parish churches also formerly imposed penalties and humiliations on erring parishioners. My father, who died a very old man, remembered a case, where the parson and churchwardens of a country church tried to persuade, or frighten, a young man into marrying a young woman whom he had got into disgrace. But they tried in vain, for he replied "Sooner than marry that girl I would marry the devil's own daughter and live with the old folks."

By the old common law, a Constable could confine offenders in the Stocks by way of security, but not by way of punishment. My own recollection is, that whilst being effectual for securing a prisoner, the Stocks were not luxurious enough to avoid being places of punishment.

Afterwards, by divers statutes, the Stocks were also appointed for the punishment of offenders. Dan Cockle, a very notorious man, often went on the spree, which invariably landed him in the stocks, but he prudently, it was said, put on his feet two pairs of thick worsted stockings when starting out on a deliberate spree, saying they protected his ankles, and "we never know what mud happen." One eminent judicial authority said "The Constable has as good authority in his place as the Chief Justice has in his."

But the old Constable had his limitations—he could only detect and capture; the Sessions and Assizes had to try the offenders and award punishment. At one time, the prosecutor had to pay the costs of the prosecution, and he often preferred not to prosecute, rather than be robbed by the criminal, and afterwards impoverished by the expenses of punishing him. This was a state of things calling for special attention, and the public spirited people of Hydrington started a Prosecution Society, early in the last century, a sort of co-operative law society—you paid so much in annually, and if you were fortunate enough to be robbed, the society paid the costs of prosecuting the offender. You

thus got something for your subscription, which was equivalent to a dividend.

This society no doubt commended itself to the people of Hydrington as being a species of old Anglo-Saxon frank-pledge—in which the district became, in a sense, answerable for the depredations done within it. But it was a great deal more than that. The members were important people, and to rob them was attended with great danger. The society published at stated periods the names of its members, with their addresses. This operated like the sprinkling of the door posts by the angel amongst the Hebrews—a special caution and immunity from destruction. Rob a member, and all the forces of the society would be used against you to detect and punish.

The society did not rely solely upon the sagacity of the Parish Constable. Bills were often posted, in language calculated to put the lawless into complete panic, announcing that some theft or depredation had been committed, and offering a reward for information leading to conviction. Some of the Articles of the society are quaint, and carry the mind back to past generations.

Article 7 says "That to prevent mistakes respecting expenses incurred in several particulars, no advertisement for the apprehension of offenders shall be inserted more than twice in any newspaper, at the expense of the Society, and that no more than nine shillings per day be allowed for three or more men, and three shillings per day for one man in pursuing offenders."

Article 8 provides "That no more than 2s. 6d. be allowed per day and night for any prisoner's maintenance in the Lock-up Rooms where such prisoners may be placed for safe custody until carried before a Magistrate."

The subscription to the society was in my time only about 6s. a year, but no doubt the society had power, if necessary, to raise money on debentures or by special Call.

I do not doubt this, because it certainly possessed the power of reducing capital, and the two usually go together.

The society had an Annual Dinner. That is a necessary thing in every healthy society—nay, moribund societies often display their rigor mortis in the form of a final winding-up, liquidating, tear-shedding dinner. I have known several societies, give a final stretch out with the remaining funds, during which the members spoke in mournful tones, with very jolly looking faces.

The Annual Dinner of the Hydrington Prosecution Society, was in very many respects out of the ordinary way. Sometimes these death warnings assume the form of a series of dinners, which, like the actors' Benefits at a theatre, effectually announce that the run of the play is closing.

The annual dinner of the Hydrington Prosecution Society was healthy, and the annual dinner was a symptom of that health—nay, the proof—not like the frequent and intermittent inspirations of a dying man, but a display of its social robustness and strength.

The dinner was not given on an ordinary invitation. No, an opportunity was taken to give the lawless another scare, and the general public a further sense of their security, and the walls of the district were posted with placards announcing when the annual dinner would be held. But the poster displayed a great deal more than that. It was headed with the Royal Arms, and then proceeded to give the following lofty pronouncement:—

"Notice is hereby given that the several persons whose names are hereunder mentioned, forming the above Society for the prosecution of felons and other depredators, are determined to prosecute, with the utmost rigour of the Law, all such persons as may be found guilty of committing any Felony or other Depredation on the person or property of any member of this Society. It has been found by exper-

ience that Institutions of this kind are of public utility in punishing offenders, who, through the inability or timidity of the person injured, frequently escape justice, and are thereby encouraged to commit still greater crimes."

Then follow the names and addresses of about 120 members.

About twenty of these are widows, to whom the desire of immunity from robbery "or other depredation;" and the delight of punishing offenders had descended from their husbands, although as items they were no doubt absent from the schedule of their husband's assets prepared for probate duty.

At the bottom of the bill it states that "Persons defacing these Bills are liable to be prosecuted." This is only what you expect from such a determined, uncompromising society. In fact it is nearly all that is left of its original felony-punishing mission, for the counties many years ago undertook the cost of prosecuting offenders at Sessions and Assizes.

Still the society is kept on. The necessity for its existence for its original purpose is nearly gone; but occasionally it jumps into quickened life with such a public announcement as this:—

#### £5 REWARD.

Whereas on the evening of Thursday last, or early on the morning of Friday, the 23rd inst., some person or persons broke the lock and entered the hen-roost belonging to and in the occupation of Mr. R. Thistle-ton, brewer, and took therefrom three hens, and killed them, afterwards leaving them in the Cart Shed; also attempted to force in a window belonging to the Brewery."

It is evident that the society is merely quiescent, and that its destroying fires are not quenched, but merely subdued, yet capable of breaking out into action and scorching

vitality when required. No doubt the thieves and the malicious injurers know this—hence the tolerably peaceful condition of Society generally.

The general public would know, from the posters, who were the fortunate members who were going to dine at the Inn. The way of transgressors is proverbially hard, but the posters seem to show that the path of the law abiding—nay, the law-enforcing—is very flowery and joyous. Why were not other details of the dinner published? If ever any dinner abounded with details, it was the Hydrington Annual Dinner. As the time for holding it approached, visionary schemes of the dinner floated in the minds of the President, Secretary, and Officials. These schemes began to shape themselves into something definite—then came the details, which were arranged after much labour and many conferences. Let nobody think, that the duties of the Secretary and President of the Hydrington Prosecution Society are light, and free from great anxiety, especially if those officials are conscientious, and feel, as they ought to feel, that the eyes of the world are upon them, and that they are called to play a great part in the nation's history. First there was a careful comparison of the menus of previous years, to see what change could be made with advantage. Although some change and novelty, were thought desirable, each old dish was mentioned and considered, but ultimately found to be indispensable. There could be no greater tribute paid to the wisdom of previous generations. Of course everybody had roast beef—even those who were not members of the society, but what would a Prosecution Dinner be without roast beef? Boiled leg of mutton and caper sauce, stood on different ground. That dish was indispensable because so few of the members boiled a leg of mutton—and then caper sauce,—it sounded so nice, that the menu would not be euphonious without it.



And then the rage for caper sauce! It was so much relished that it might be some appetizing form of destroying the criminal tendencies of misdemeanants and depredators,—although the corns, or berries, of the Caper, were very scarce in the sauce.

Scarcity of capers often gave rise to conversation. It reminded one of the currant muffin I used to meet with when a boy. The currants were so scarce, that I and my younger brother arranged to sing out to the other when either of us came to anything. At one of these famous dinners, a member, hearing his neighbours conversing, asked what was the topic, and was told that it was the "topic of Caper-corn," which sounded something very geographical. Of course it was thought necessary that there should be cod and oyster sauce—it would appear an ordinary dinner without that, and the Hydrington Prosecution Society's was not an ordinary dinner. The result was that the only change possible was something additional, and it was unanimously agreed that if they had anything additional the attention of the members must be called to it, as members arranged their appetites for the usual programme, and endeavoured to go through it vigorously and skilfully, so that with the last dish, vanished their last bit of appetite. He was a poor prosecutor who was unable to go through the whole courses,—he was like the Society itself when at Quarter Sessions, it could offer no evidence on some of the counts in the indictment.

But let us suppose that all the details have been arranged, and the day of the dinner has arrived. It is an eventful day. The officials look careworn and anxious. They feel that they are making history. The members, too, are looking forward to it. Many of them when arranging their business engagements, have had to say, "Oh! I cannot come on that day—it is the dinner." The dinner

tickets, however, are transferable, and if a man is in a very bad state of health, or very infirm with age, or cannot by any possibility go himself, he can send a substitute, although the guests are always very sympathetic with any member, who, from a sense of duty, goes to the dinner with a less robust appetite than formerly.

One old gentleman who had attended regularly for a great many years, and had made a reputation in the way of availing himself of opportunities, was seen to shed a tear over the decadence of his appetite and capacity, and it shed a gloom, for a short time, over six seats to the right, and six seats to the left of him, and twelve seats to the right in front. But when the others were obliged, although from very different reasons, to cease eating, he seemed to recover his equanimity, no doubt philosophizing that satiety is a great leveller of both young and old, the wealthy and the delicate.

My first dinner I attended when a young man. I sat in front of a huge round of beef. The carver was a pleasant little dapper man, very expert with the carving tools, and of great experience at these dinners. His name was Charles Maude. I did not know at first that it was Charles who was carving, for he was obscured by the very large piece of beef, and I could only see two skilful arms carving away at the top. The guest on my right said to me "I think that it is Charles Maude who is carving, from his voice." And so it turned out to be, for as the beef got lower, Charles' head (Charles Maude's head, I mean) began to emerge from a state of eclipse, so that we could enter into casual conversation with him.

The last time I dined with the society, an old cricketing friend of mine was President, and I sat on his left. When he was carving the cod-fish the plates had to be taken to a very determined man of the name of Bill Plumbo, to be sup-

plied with oyster sauce. One of the first to be served with the fish was Mr. Joseph Gee, who had only one arm, but who, withal, was very expert with it. Gee said to Bill, "Bill, pass the sauce." Bill replied "send thi' plate up." Bill would not part with the sauce, which he carefully dealt out to every plate sent to him. This struck me as rather churlish on Bill's part, so I said to the President "Why doesn't Bill pass the sauce?" The President (still carving) said "He's put in by t' Committee." I said "What to do?" The President (still carving) said "To serve the sauce." I was then struck with the amount of labour and detail which the Committee had evidently to undergo, and asked "Have you a man told off for every sauce?" "No," said the President (still carving), "Only the oyster sauce." The thing seemed enveloped in mystery,—it possessed a strange fascination for me, and I asked why the oyster sauce called for such special treatment. Then in a moment's leisure he gave this hurried explanation. He said "You see Gee is very clever with one hand, and he's passionately fond of stewed oysters, and last year he got hold of the oyster sauce Jug (which was an ordinary quart jug) and he put in two four-pronged forks and a table spoon, which he so manipulated with his fingers when pouring out the sauce, that they operated as a grate and nobody got an oyster, and when the dish was removed he ate all the oysters himself. The Committee had the matter up and appointed Bill to serve the sauce." I looked at poor Gee,—he seemed to eat his fish in a half-hearted way, downcast by the nemesis which was over-shadowing him.

Sometimes the menu included green peas, but as the dinner was usually held in winter, the peas were tinned or preserved. I am very fond of peas, but I often wonder how our fore-fathers managed to eat them with their rude dining tools. The two-pronged fork would be no good, and this

no doubt caused the knife to be used as a means of conveyance of the peas to the mouth. Such is the effect of heredity, that some people still use the knife, even when they have a four-pronged fork available. One man did so recently at a dinner, to the great annoyance of his next neighbour, who, becoming irritated, by the persistent use of the knife said "I never use my knife for Peys"—to which the offending guest replied, with great innocence, "Hars that, car'nt ta balance 'em?"

Wm. Ashworth was a frail, elderly man, who made great efforts to dine up to the traditions of the society and who having reached a pitch of dangerous success said "I can't hey't,—put us a bit i' this henkercher to tak home to ar Sarah!"

Oh! it was a vigorous dinner. The members tucked in as if they were punishing criminals,—instead of that they were punishing the Innkeeper, and disordering their own stomachs.

When the dinner was over and the members had got their tickets for glasses, I went over to Bill Plumbo and asked him why he stuck so to the oyster sauce, and he gave me a very animated statement, the facts of which agreed with the President's account, but he added "Gee's conduct was shameful." I said "Did nobody get an oyster?" He said emphatically "No! A Committee was appointed to hold an enquiry, and they could not find that anybody get an oyster." "Gee's nobbut hawf as many arms as I hev, but by gow he seems to have twice as many fingers. Nowt could pass them two forks and spoin."

There was invariably an interval between the dinner and the subsequent meeting, and I spent this interval in talking with Bill. He was a Freemason, and assured me that some of the Masons' St. John's dinners were superior to the one of which we had just partaken. He told me

about one very successful festival of St. John held in their own Club Rooms and cooked by their own Caretaker. The day following this St. John he and four more met without pre-arrangement at the Rooms about 11 o'clock, and drank what was left of the soup and picked the cold turkey. They might have been suffering from an epidemic, their symptoms were so common, such as parched throats, tender appetites, and disinclination for work. When the first two of these symptoms had received some treatment the third called for indulgence. One of the five said "Let us go somewhere for the day. I don't want to go to work." One called "Uncle" approved of it. Why he should I don't know, for he had not done any work for years. He might have been brother to everybody's father or mother, for everybody called him "Uncle." Joan also approved of it. His reason also is obscure, for he had been superannuated on a pension for several years. Bill Plumbo approved of it. His constitution needed a change, and his business had got used to sparing him frequently. Dick approved of it. He rarely had a day off work, but when he had, it necessitated another day's rest. The fifth man gave special reasons founded on masonic precedent why such a course should be adopted,—but added that he had come out without any money. So had Dick,—so had Joan. Uncle, however (ever the money finder in emergencies) had a £5 note and Bill had a shilling. Uncle was told to hand over the note to Bill, who was made Treasurer, with a balance in hand of £5 1s. It was decided to go to Liverpool, and Bill got single railway tickets and the five went to Liverpool. On their arrival, the first two symptoms above mentioned again broke out, and called for treatment. They repaired to a pub where Bill paid for drinks and cheese and bread, when his four companions decided to have a short walk. Bill was tired, and did not want to go, and was left

behind. After being alone a short time, he bethought him that his friends had no money. He, therefore thought it his duty to find them, so that he could pay for anything they wanted. He turned towards the landing stage, and seeing many people going over a gangway into a steamer, naturally thought his friends might be on board. He, too, went on and searched and made enquiries for Uncle and his three other friends. Not being able to see or hear anything of them on deck, he went down the companion staircase to make his searches and enquiries. I must now give you Bill's own words.

"When I got downstairs I found such a nice agreeable chap with gold lace on his cap inside a little place with a short door, and he was surrounded with bottles and glasses. I took to him from the first and got into chat with him. I found that it was a small bar. I ordered a drink and asked him to have one. He did so, and justified the opinion I had formed of him,—that he was agreeable. He was extremely interesting, and we had two or three drinks, when I felt a motion in the ship. I said to him "it felt as if the ship were moving." He said 'Yes, it's been moving for half an hour.' I said 'Is the ship off?' He said 'Oh, yes, we are near the bar.' I said 'Where is it going to?' He said 'The Isle of Man.' I said does it stop anywhere?' He said, 'No, not until we get to Douglas.' Eh, I was ill off. I wondered what Uncle, Joan, and them would do wi' me off and having all t' brass. However, there was no help for it. I had to go to the Isle of Man, and stop there for three days before there was a boat back, and when I got back to Hydrington I had only a shilling. I should have enjoyed myself first rate if it had not been for thinking about Joan, Uncle, and them having no brass."

I asked him if he knew how his friends got on. He said "Oh, yes, they looked for me all over Liverpool, but as they couldn't find me they borrowed a sovereign of Ambrose Levers to come home with."

Somebody gave three knocks then and said "Gentle-

men, take your places and order your drinks!" This was the President, who knocked the table with his two foot rule. Bill rushed to a chair. The careworn expression which he had when he was serving the oyster sauce was gone,—he had now only Bill Plumbo to attend to, and had the satisfaction of knowing that he had faithfully done his duty, and had fearlessly guarded and fairly distributed, as he was expected to do by the Committee, the oyster sauce.

I then sought the Treasurer. I had a little business with him. The society allowed a guinea to a member towards the costs of prosecuting in Petty Sessions, a cost which the counties have not yet undertaken. I had as I thought a guinea to receive for prosecuting a man for an assault upon the son of Mr. Charleson, a member of the society. Many months before I was quietly sitting in my office when Mr. Charleson was announced and admitted. He was excited and said "I want you to prosecute a rascal, one of my weavers, a tramping weaver, for assaulting my son John. Give him the full benefit of the law,—punish him as much as you can—spare no expense—I do not care what it costs. I intend to make an example of the man for kicking up a disturbance in my mill and striking my son." I said, "Give me particulars of what he has done." Mr. Charleson replied "I can't give you particulars, but I want the rascal punishing." I said "Who can give me particulars?" He said "My son." I then asked him to send his son down. He promised to do so, and again impressed upon me that the offender was to have the utmost punishment and no expense was to be spared in getting it for him. I said "Send your son down, and we will see what the thing is." Mr. Charleson rose and said "Good morning, I'll send him down at once." When he had got a step or two out of my office he turned back and said "Of course you quite understand that I am not to be put to any expense in this matter.

· You must get every penny out of that scamp of a weaver."

I could not avoid laughing and saying "Then all that pecuniary extravagance which you have been talking about is of somebody else's money, not yours." I pointed out that there was not much hope of getting money out of a tramping weaver for his own prosecution. Mr. Charleson said "I am in the Prosecution Society, which will allow a guinea." I said "Well send your son down." The son came, the weaver was prosecuted, and fined, but did not pay. It was to get the usual guinea that I wanted to see the Treasurer. When I told him my object he said, "Oh! Charleson drew that guinea six months since."

The President was again knocking with his two foot rule for order, and when obtained, he proposed "Success to the Hydrington Prosecution Society," and pointed out the good work which the society had done in the past, and the present diminution of crime in the country. He did this in a manner which convinced me that this satisfactory state of things was very largely owing to the Hydrington Prosecution Society. I also gathered that he would not be responsible for the safety of the country if the society was discontinued; a society which he said must not be measured by the public fuss which it made. Here he was not intelligible to me. I thought he was recklessly throwing away some of the society's valuable advantages. But he did it in a moment of daring. I had previously noticed that the members were never afraid after dining together. They were more like a garrison within the castle walls smiling complacently at the enemy on the plain.

If the President could inform the members that any warning notice had been given or reward offered for criminal information during the year, it was invariably cheered as a great success, showing the absolute necessity for the continuance of the Hydrington Prosecution Society,



which the President said would ever uphold the British Constitution and punish lawlessness.

Don't denounce the society. The social and convivial element justifies its continued existence. How is it that we are apt to sneer at what is merely social and convivial? Mankind has not so over-cultivated itself that it has no call for the social and convivial. A Social and Convivial Club, so called, is disapproved in these pharisaical times, but when allied to something else,—politics,—social reformation,—faddism of any kind,—it is different. Well, this old society may be a little more candid than some, and yet does not want to dissociate itself from the old principle of punishing felons. It is not the only society that is useless for its original purposes. Give a man something to eat or drink, and you disclose a man,—that cannot live on problems and abstract ideas. So long as we have one foot on earth, we need not affect to despise these human necessities. We may think we appear to be more exalted by these denunciations of creature comforts. But do we? Are we even more candid? Has our doctor forbidden them? Have we too little self-restraint? Has indigestion gripped us? Is the liver all right, or is the gout lying in wait for us?

Many people talk as if dinners were confined to tenantry and freemasons. But is there not sufficient community of interest in a good table and a good appetite, without either rents or mystery? Dining is a very old institution. Some literary men have been known to dine, but that is the feast of reason and the flow of soul. But if it were a number of men who had a passion for thief and vagabond hunting who dined, well that is very different. Some would say "as you are no longer required to hunt and prosecute felons you have no justification for dining." Such a conclusion would be cruel, and probably disregarded. The

Hydrington men will go on, in a pure love of antiquity, with their dinner. One saddens to think of the probable consequences of the abolition of the Hydrington Prosecution Dinner, upon the members, and upon society generally. Would the death rate be affected? Would medical practices decline? Would the town be imperilled? Probably not, but another old local institution would have disappeared, and I disapprove of unnecessary obliteration of our habits and customs, and of violent social changes.

We go to a great deal of trouble to find out relics of antiquity and abandoned old habits and customs. It were folly to bury an old Society with a view to dig traces of it up again in another generation.

Vain, very vain, thy weary search to find  
That bliss which only centres in the mind.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yes, let the rich deride, the proud disdain,  
These simple blessings of the lowly train;  
To me, more dear, congenial to my heart,  
One native charm, than all the gloss of art:  
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,  
The soul adopts and owns their first-born sway;  
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,  
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.  
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,  
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,  
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,  
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain.  
And even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,  
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?





THE METRICAL IMITATIONS OF  
CHATTERTON.

BY WILLIAM C. HALL.

THE student of English literature of the eighteenth century, a period notable for the original character of its poetry and prose, will not fail to give reasonable attention to the verse of Thomas Chatterton. Little of it is the mere doggrel of a rimester or the laboured construction of a painful versifier. As a whole, indeed, it does not rank high in the order of prosody, but much of it reaches a very estimable standard of poetical achievement. In the work of one who died in his eighteenth year we should not expect to find, notwithstanding the intervention of exceptional genius, the power of elaborate metrical construction, or the force of a unique originality; but if Chatterton's imagination was not unique, it was at least exceptional, and his verse, if it have no title to elaborateness as distinct from the elaboration which it certainly possesses, may yet be described as unusually skilful in its form.

Not only the specialist, who may not pardonably overlook the curiosities of the period of his study, but those

whom the tragedy of Chatterton's life—the most piteous tragedy in the history of our literature—attracts sympathetically to the general reading of his works, will be drawn by the fascination of his modes of expression to an analysis, however crude and imperfect, of these modes, these manners of diction and metrical form. May I call them mannerisms? For the young poet, like the poetaster, save when this latter minion beats his wings in pure air—the fatal element of the would-be “maker”—is necessarily the copyist of modes of expression and forms of construction which to lesser minds than those of their creators are actually or tend to become mannerisms. Your sonnet must resemble the Petrarchian model—yet what is Petrarchian? And what is Spenserian or Miltonic? You cannot avoid what I signify by the term “mannerism” where the spiritual quality, generally peculiar and distinctive, is not transfused through the metrical quantities which to be normal must be invariable. Technique does not appear as technique to the master-mind—it is the natural vehicle of spontaneous art—but with those of his school it pronounces itself, in conformity or aberration, in every line of their work. Now, Chatterton is the pupil of many schools, and a remarkable commoner of them all. His ability to seize on the technique of his predecessors is shown in the close imitations of his verse, which reveal, besides identity of measure, similarity of diction and an approximation of temper by no means inconsiderable.

At the outset of my attempt to confirm this thesis, let me add one more to the innumerable records of tantalising circumstances which stand ironically about the path of the would-be discloser of interesting literary comparisons. It is well-known that Chatterton received encouragement and inspiration, and probably his first incentive, to produce

verse from Thomas Phillips, the usher of his school, Colston's Hospital, Bristol. A peculiar friendship sprang up between the two, and I do not doubt that Phillips, who had achieved considerable local repute as a writer of verses, instructed Chatterton in the art. Can we trace his influence? Alas, no. We should be able, could we legitimately assign the satirical poem "Sly Dick" to Phillips, who was long considered its author; but the weight of such evidence as may be adduced stamps it as being unmistakably Chatterton's. Not a single piece of verse by Phillips is extant, so far as I can trace. Chatterton's beautiful "Elegy" on the death of his friend suggests that he was a singer of the seasons and the circling year; an indication which points to one of two circumstances, (1) either that Chatterton did not imitate the verse of his first poetical guide, or (2) that most of his earlier poems have perished. Here is the particular circumstance to which I draw attention, the removal of which I required to free me from the horns of this dilemma. Phillips was a fairly regular contributor to "Felix Farley's Bristol Journal." He died in 1769. The British Museum has no copies of this journal. The Bristol libraries, where alone we should really expect to find them, have none that would serve our purpose: for Mr. Norris Mathews, the City Librarian, in response to my request, informs me—"The earliest volumes of 'Felix Farley's Bristol Journal' in our libraries (1768 and 1769), I regret, are very incomplete, and the numbers that we have for these years do not contain poems signed by Thomas Phillips." The lost numbers even in these years, might have enabled us to throw new light on the early work of Chatterton. The Fates who live behind the gods were ever ironical before mortals.

That Chatterton loved metrical imitation with an almost

fiendish passion is evident in two stanzas of the Tragedy of *Ælla*, descriptive of night and dawn respectively.

The worlde ys darke wythe nyghte; the wyndes are styll;  
 Faintelie the mone her palyde lyghte makes gleme;  
 The upryste sprytes the sylente letten fylle,  
 With ouphante faerys joynynge ynne the dreme;  
 The forreste sheenethe wythe the sylver leme;  
 Now maie mie love be sated ynn yttes treate;  
 Uponne the lynche of somme swefte reynynge streme,  
 Att the swote banquette I wylle swotelie eate.  
 Thys ys the howse; yee hyndes, swythyn appere.

The mornynge 'gyns along the Easte to sheene;  
 Darklinge the lyghte doe onne the waters plaie;  
 The feynte rodde leme slowe creepeth oere the greene,  
 Toe chase the merkyness of nyghte awaie;  
 Swifte flies the howers thatte wylle brynge oute the daie  
 The softe dewe falleth onne the greenynge grasse:  
 The shepster mayden, dyghtynge her arraie,  
 Scante sees her vysage yn the wauie glasse;  
 Bie the full daylieght wee scalle *Ælla* see,  
 Or Brystowes wallyd towne; damoysele, followe mee.

A line-for-line comparison of these reveals similarity of accent and quantity and pause, an exactly appropriate transformation of figure, and an approximation even to alliterative imitation.

Most of the verse of Chatterton outside the Rowley Poems is satirical. Satirical verse least of all poetry lends itself to comparison: for the reason that the only considerable element in its structure is its rime—its effectiveness may be weakened by elaborate accentuation or compression of diction. Rime here is not a connection, as I think it is in the nobler quality of poetry, but a termination, and in it the real point and sting are to be found. The rest of the line, save for a general conformity to metrical fashion, is without much consequence in verse

that is palpably satirical. Therefore, I regard it idle to seek for the satirist upon whose foundations Chatterton may have built his particular style. He was, surely, as nearly all his prose pieces testify, with too much nature a satirist to require a model, as also he was too voluminously a publisher of satires to refer his outpourings to those of any predecessor or contemporary. So I have not followed the matter sufficiently closely to be able to say with Dr. Wilson that "Churchill became his favourite model as a satirist." But I should say that his satires resemble Dryden's in contrast with Pope's in the free, uncrowded, unbalanced character of their lines, and Pope's in contrast with Dryden's in their chief characteristic, the deadliness, or liveliness, of their sting.

Since dissipation is thy only joy,  
Go, Grafton, join the dance, and act the boy;  
'Tis not for fops in cabinets to shine,  
And justice must confess that title's thine,  
Dress to excess, and powder into fame,  
In drums and hurricanes exalt your name.  
There you may glitter, there your worth may rise  
Above the little reach of vulgar eyes.  
But in the high departments of the state  
Your talents are too trifling to be great.

(Resignation.)

The Song in the Tragedy of *Ælla* is worthy of notice for its resemblance to the mad song of Ophelia. When we consider that the temper of it is that of grief as distinct from madness, we are able to appreciate the clever construction of a lyrical dirge obviously approximating to the Shakespearian model. The diction is similar; one or two lines are almost identical: the refrain is unquestionably drawn from Shakespeare.

O ! syngue untoe mie roundelaie,  
 O! droppe the brynie teare wythe mee,  
 Daunce ne moe atte hallie daie,  
 Lycke a reyngnge ryver bee;  
     Mie love ys dedde,  
     Gon to hys death-bedde,  
     Al under the wyllowe tree.

Blacke hys cryne as the wyntere nyghte,  
 Whyte hys rode as the sommer snowe,  
 Rodde hys face as the mornynge lyghte,  
 Cale he lyes ynne the grave belowe;  
     Mie love ys dedde,  
     Gon to hys death-bedde,  
     Al under the wyllowe tree.

Dr. Wilson, in his luminous work, "Chatterton: A Biographical Study," says of "Elinoure and Juga," probably the first of Chatterton's antique ballads, "it is curious to catch in its stanzas echoes of the polished quatrains of Gray's "Elegy," then in the first blush of its popularity." He quotes two stanzas, slightly modernised:—

## JUGA.

Sisters in sorrow, on this daisied bank,  
 Where melancholy broods, we will lament;  
 Bewet with morning dew and even dank;  
     Like levind oaks in each the other bent;  
     Or like foreletten halls of merriment,  
 Whose ghastly witches hold the train of fright,  
 Where lethal ravens bark, and owlets wake the night.

## ELINOURE.

No more the miskynette shall wake the morn,  
 The minstrel dance, good cheer, and morris play;  
 No more the ambling palfry and the horn  
     Shall from the lessel rouse the fox away;  
     I'll seek the forest all the livelong day;  
 All night among the graved church-glebe will go,  
 And to the passing sprites lecture my tale of woe.

More noticeable are the *Elegy* on the death of Thomas Phillips—



No more I hail the morning's golden gleam,  
 No more the wonders of the view I sing;  
 Friendship requires a melancholy theme,  
 At her command the awful lyre I string!—

and the beautiful Elegy whose first verses run—

Joyless I seek the solitary shade,  
 Where dusky contemplation veils the scene,  
 The dark retreat of leafless branches made,  
 Where sickening sorrow wets the yellowed green.

The darksome ruins of some sacred cell,  
 Where erst the sons of Superstition trod,  
 Tottering upon the mossy meadow, tell  
 We better know, but less adore, our God.

Nor should the "Elegy on the death of Mr. John Tandey, sen.," and that on Mr. Alcock, a miniature-painter, of Bristol, be passed unnoticed, as being based structurally upon the stanza of Gray's "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat."

Ye virgins of the sacred choir,  
 Awake the soul-dissolving lyre,  
     Begin the mournful strain;  
 To deck the much-loved Tandey's urn,  
 Let the poetic genius burn,  
     And all Parnassus drain.

Ye nine, awake the chorded shell,  
 Whilst I the praise of Alcock tell  
     In truth-dictated lays:  
 On wings of genius take thy flight,  
 O Muse! above the Olympic height,  
     Make echo sing his praise.

It would be possible to show the affinity of much of Chatterton's work to that of several other poets—this is indicated in Mr. Skeat's "Essay on the Rowley Poems," Section 8, in the Aldine edition: better still in the letter

appended to the preface of the 1778 collection entitled "Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, by Thomas Chatterton." But the chief interest of comparison is as we refer the bulk of the more significant poems, the famous pseudo-Rowley Romances, to Chaucer and Spenser. It is in this field that we are brought into view of his real mastery of metrical imitation. My consideration of this fact convinces me that, had he so inclined his pen, he would soon have developed into a writer of perfect sonnets: but this is a judgment by the way. His imitations of Chaucer are evident chiefly in casual—if anything of his may be termed casual—and detached lines—

Before yonne roddie sonne has droove hys wayne  
(*Ella. 1*).

Soone as the morne dyd dyghte the roddie sunne,  
Whann ynn the heavn full half hys course was runn  
(*Gouler's Requiem*).

The sunne ento Vyrgyne was gotten  
(*Romaunte of the Cnyghte*).

In Virgyne the sweltrie sun gan sheene  
(*Balade of Charitie*).

Such suggest instantly the rhythm and phraseology of the opening lines of the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. As Mr. Skeats says, Chatterton's reading of Chaucer was not extensive, but the Rowley Poems, particularly the "Battle of Hastings,"—a fragment which I fancy Chatterton could have continued indefinitely—impress me strongly with having a diction and a measure more Chaucerian than modernised editions reveal. He was ignorant enough of Anglo-Saxon, and of Chaucerian grammar, but I do not think that his substitutionary employment of pseudo-archaic words is merely an unskilful substitution for his own

marvellous vocabulary. It seems to me that he gave heed studiously to the harmonious arrangement of his borrowings, was not unmindful of the balance of his rhythm, and paid distinct attention to alliteration. Otherwise, I cannot with satisfaction to myself understand the success of his great imposture over readers who, though they may have been "mostly fools," were not entirely ignorant of such forms of poetry as the ancient ballads.

There is in the diction of Spenser more than a reminder of Chaucer, but the stanza of Spenser is originally and uniquely his own. Chatterton, however, artfully declares in one of his letters to Walpole, "The stanza Rowley writes in, instead of being introduced by Spenser, was in use 300 years before." This statement, which, of course, no one need examine, humorously invites us to compare the stanza in which is set the major part of the Rowley legend with the Spenserian. My impression is that Chatterton originally intended to give a faithful rendering of the latter, but, finding that its involved riming checked his speed of composition, modified it, using ten lines instead of nine and four rimes instead of three. He practically dropped one of Spenser's lines and added a new terminal couplet, a couplet involving the Alexandrine in most of the stanzas, the clean cut and finish of which will often bear comparison with Spenser's. The management of this interrupting duodecasyllabic line in sustained verse has been, I think, to followers of Spenser a more difficult task than the rime construction. Chatterton does not appear to have realised its difficulty; he skips freely, buoyantly, from stanza to stanza; in the "Battle of Hastings (II.)" with an agility, a quaint manœuvring of his diction, that is astonishing. His stanzas lack delicate polish; they have their rugged periods, but, as a whole, possess smoothness and clear surface. Their rhythm is regular over

considerable compactness of quantity ; and the vocabulary upon which the poet draws, as his intuitive employment of the right word proves, is remarkably extensive.

Byron averred that Chatterton was mad, but there is a diabolical possession which is not akin to lunacy. And if the inventiveness of the devil lay within the soul of "the marvellous boy," let us remember that he poured forth "a stately song" which even Wordsworth would hear "at sober eve."

## SONNET.

### THE FRIENDS.

Far out the wind-swept runes of the lone sea  
 Traversed are by two brave barques that the Night,  
 In inky shades, is steeping from all sight  
 Save His—the Pilot of that watery lea.  
 Now winds o'er waves in sportive revels flee,  
 As if released from thraldom to the light,  
 The parted barques close woo the wild wind's might  
 To win that Harbour where their rest shall be.

Thus o'er life's sea wears out the voyage for all,  
 Each day, 'mid stress or shine, we near our Port,  
 And if at night we lose the Friend day brought  
 (The neighb'ring barque erstwhile disclosed by dawn),  
 No power of Death nor Night can weave a pall  
 To shroud that fair Hav'n where we'll meet at morn.

LAURENCE CLAY.



## IMMANUEL KANT.

BY GUSTAV JACOBY.

IMMANUEL KANT was born on the 22nd of April of the year 1724 at Koenigsberg, "the city of the seven hills," on the Baltic, where Prussia's Kings are crowned even to this day.

Either his father or his grandfather came from Scotland. The name was spelled "Cant." According to the German rules of pronunciation it would, therefore, have been pronounced "Tsant." To obviate this a substitution of the C by K was adopted. Kant's father was by trade a saddler, and in humble circumstances. The mother was a very pious woman. She usually accompanied her favourite in walks outside the city, oftentimes pointing out to him God's greatness in nature. She thereby laid the foundation in her son's mind of his most enthusiastic love both of nature and the physical sciences. In features Kant very much resembled his mother. Even to his dying days he used to speak of her with the highest veneration. What a tenderness there is in this utterance of his to a friend : "Never shall I forget my mother, for she nursed and fostered the first germs of good in myself ; she opened my heart to the impressions of

nature; she awakened and quickened my understanding and her teachings have had a permanent beneficial influence upon my life." History proves how often great men received an impulse to their achievements from their mothers. How singular that this demolisher of narrowmindedness and preconceived opinions should have been brought up in the extremest orthodox creed by both parent and teacher, the pastor Schultz! Kant never undervalued that influence. "Say what you will of pietism" are his words, "no one can deny the real worth of the characters which it formed. They possessed the highest that man can aspire to: a peace of mind, a cheerfulness, an inner harmony with self, which no passion could ruffle. I yet remember what happened on one occasion when difficulties arose between the trades of the leather-cutters and the saddlers with reference to their respective rights. My father's interests were seriously affected by the contest; yet even in domestic conversation, the differences were discussed by my parents with such tolerance and indulgence towards the other side, and such immutable trust in Divine providence, that boy as I then was, the remembrance of it will never fade from my memory."

Kant, having been intended for the Church, was sent in 1740 to the Königsberg University, where, however, along with theology, he pursued the study of mental philosophy, physical sciences and mathematics. At school he distinguished himself by his proficiency in Latin, of which he acquired such a mastery as to be able to speak that language both with fluency and elegance. Even to his latest days he would recite the chief passages of Lucretius' poem "Of the Nature of Things" by heart. At the Gymnasium already great things were expected of him, and Kant himself indulged in fancies of parading his name "Cantius"

on the title pages of Latin works of his. The proverb, that "a little body doth often harbour a great soul," became verified in Kant, who was a thin little man, not more than five feet high. He was of slender build, with a breast almost concave and a deformed right shoulder. He was distinguished by a broad serene forehead denoting extraordinary intellectual power. A fine nose and clear, bright blue eyes embellished his face. In youth he was, according to his own confession, extraordinarily shy, absent-minded, and often wandering in dreamland. His memory was a most powerful one.

In 1740 Kant matriculated at the Königsberg University as a theological student; but he chiefly attended lectures on mathematics and physical sciences, feeling an aversion to the study of theology. After preaching a few times in country churches, he felt the yoke of a minister of the Prussian Orthodox Church unbearable.

By his father's death in 1746 his circumstances became straitened and being unable to support himself by teaching at Königsberg, he was very reluctantly compelled to leave his native place. He believed in the Scriptural sentence: "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is man that wandereth from his place." In the space of nine years Kant accepted three engagements in succession as private tutor; first with a country preacher, then with one of the great squires, and lastly with a count, all three in the vicinity. No sooner, however, had he acquired sufficient means than he established himself as a private lecturer or "doctor docens" at his Alma Mater. Although Kant, with greatly exaggerated modesty, said of himself that "never perhaps did, with better maxims, exist a worse tutor than himself," it is a fact that he did in no common degree gain for himself the love and attachment of his pupils and the admiration of their parents. Thus amongst the first

Prussian landowners who liberated their peasants from the bonds of feudalism—were Kant's pupils, the Von Huelsen. At the age of twenty-three he published his first book entitled "Thoughts on the true estimate of the living forces and criticisms of the arguments of Leibnitz and other mathematicians," in which he had the audacity to arbitrate on one of the most difficult of disputed questions of science between two of the greatest world-authorities, Descartes and Leibnitz. But his modesty was by no means inferior to his hardihood, as the following sentence shows: "I wish to avail myself of this Preface, humbly to express my homage and veneration to the great masters of science whom I shall henceforth have the honor of calling my opponents, and whose worth is not susceptible of being disparaged by the freedom with which I have ventured to express my own views." Another extract from this maiden essay must suffice: "Our philosophy is in truth but on the threshold of profound knowledge. God knows when it will step over that! It is not difficult to perceive its frailty in many of the things which it attempts. Only too often one finds that Prejudice is the main strength of its arguments. The fault must be laid at the door of those who indulge in the prevailing tendency of too-widely expanding human knowledge. They vain seek big schemes of philosophy. What in reality is requisite is that they should be well-grounded and thorough." Here we can already discern Kant's chief aim of first laying the foundations of true knowledge before expanding it.

In 1755, the year before the outbreak of the seven year's war, Kant made the brilliant attempt by his "Natural History and Theory of the Heaven's" of explaining on Newton's principles the genesis of the planetary system; that grand idea which, as it were, hovered in the air, simultaneously conceived, but quite independently from



one another, by Kant and the French savant Lambert, and which was subsequently further developed in the "Exposition du systeme du monde," by Laplace. Kant boldly dedicated this book to Frederick the Great.

Newton having been unable to explain the genesis of the planetary system by purely mechanical principles, had asserted that order had been directly created by the hand of God and had thereby landed his mechanical exposition in the mire, transforming Nature into a mere derogatory creature, and compelling natural science and theology ignominiously to join hands. In contradiction to Newton's hypothesis, but in perfect harmony with his principles Kant had expounded, in the same spirit—as Darwin in the following century—and in a different sphere had done, the planetary system by the evolution of material causes during an infinity of time. Kant by no means denied the divine creation, he only pushed it further back. He thus gainsaid that the planetary system "as it exists," had been created immediately by the hand of God and proved how it had gradually evolved itself by its own inherent energies and upon purely mechanical lines into its present shape and order. What a triumph for a youth! "Because such a world did evolve from chaos," argued Kant, "therefore, chaos must have had a creator who predestinated such a world in chaos . . . He embodied into the forces of Nature a latent Art to evolve itself from chaos into a perfect world-symmetry . . . There *must* be a God, because Nature, even in chaos, *cannot* but proceed in accordance with law and order." "But," says Kant, "wherever *Life* begins in Nature, the explanation of mechanism must stop. The living organism defies all mechanical explanation."

During the years 1755 and 1756 Kant gave the three inaugural discourses by which he became entitled to

a candidature for a professorship at his Alma Mater as soon as a vacancy occurred and in these he gradually advanced to his critical philosophy. Through the seven year's war, however, appointments were suspended. In 1758 at last a vacancy did occur. But the Russians had meanwhile invaded that Prussian province and the Russian General in his omniscience preferred a private lecturer, of whom history is silent, to Kant. The next vacancy in 1762 was, by ill-luck, that of the professor of Poetry—with functions somewhat akin to those of our Poet Laureate; a post which Kant respectfully declined. In 1766 the great thinker did finally secure an appointment as under-librarian of the University at the magnificent salary of 62 thalers or about £9 sterling a year! Need I say that Kant did not feel thereby in the slightest manner discouraged. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" did not apply to the great thinker. Borowski, one of Kant's students, and subsequently his amanuensis, has preserved us an interesting account of Kant's first debut as a lecturer in 1755. "The students," Borowski says, "streamed in such numbers, that hall, lobby, and even stair-case became crammed full. Kant seemed extremely nervous. Unaccustomed to his duties, he was almost put out of countenance. His voice became lower even than usual. He frequently corrected himself. But all that only made us the more enthusiastic of the man with whose vast learning we were penetrated, but whom we saw before us not timid, it is true, yet overawed with modesty. At the next lesson, things went off more smoothly. His discourse became, and remained for all time to come, most profound, outspoken, ingenuous and fascinating." Kant's chief object was directed toward the stirring up of his hearers, of their self-activity and self-cogitation. "People

should not come to him to learn philosophy," he said, "but philosophising or thinking." He forced the students to take an active part in the processes of his investigations, and of observing the operations of their own minds. He, therefore, did not care for students taking down his lectures and insisted on being followed with the closest attention. He used illustrations from his favourite poets, such as Pope and Haller, and from geographical discoverers. The dull were frightened away by his exactions. Nobody dared to resort to interruptions or other students' freaks. A student's extravagant dress would suffice to cause him annoyance, in fact any uncommon incident would. A crowd of strangers attended his lectures which embraced subjects as different as mathematics, physics, logic, metaphysic, natural law, ethics, physical geography, and anthropology. On the two last subjects he lectured likewise to a larger public. Often his lectures extended to four or five hours a day. It must have been, what with preparatory studies in such divergent fields, what with experimental investigations a tremendous strain on his feeble constitution. By subjecting, however, his whole life to methodic rule and discipline, he managed to overcome all obstacles. Neither during his walks, nor in the afternoons, when he enjoyed the company of his friends, both at table and siesta, would he trouble his thoughts with scientific or metaphysical topics. His disciple Jachmann has left us a charming and vivid picture of this delightful intercourse after dinner with friends: "Kant went every afternoon to Green's" Jachmann says, "whom he would find in an easy chair sound asleep. He took his seat by the side of Green—enjoying his thoughts until he, too, fell asleep. Next Bank-Director Rüffmann appeared on the scene. He likewise conformed himself to the ways of his friends. Ultimately Motherby entered at the appointed hour, acting the part of knocker-

up, and then delightful dialogues would be set a-going. At the very stroke of 7 o'clock, the company broke up! Often did I overhear the neighbours remark: It could not be seven yet. Professor Kant had not yet passed." What a splendid subject for a great painter! The same biographer certifies that during the nine years he had attended Kant's lectures, he could not remember that one lesson had been skipped, nor that fifteen minutes had been wasted! What an economist. One of the classical writers of Germany, Herder, who had attended Kant's lectures from 1762 to 1764, once became so overpowered by his master's eloquence that he embodied his thoughts in a poem which he presented to him the following morning. Kant took delight in reading it to the audience. In the famous "Letters for the advancement of humanity," Herder later on paid a magnificent tribute to his master. Thirty years later the youthful Fichte, carried away by enthusiasm, travelled from Jena to the far-distant Koenigsberg to pay his homage to Kant. We find this curious record in his diary: "I attended a lecture of Kant. My expectations were disappointed. He is a dull speaker." How can we explain the discrepancy between these witnesses? Had Kant's eloquence in the course of thirty years deteriorated? We find the same contrast in the style and tone of Kant's writings. Passages of great vivacity, elegance, and beauty alternate with those of dullness, heaviness, and complexity. The well-known critic Julian Schmidt, in his "History of German Literature since Lessing's death," has pointed out that "sometimes Kant was the finest, most versatile dialectician who did not scruple even to fathom the very abyss, sometimes the sturdy, rugged practitioner, possessed of a broad commonsense, who would shrug his shoulders at the fathomless gulf . . . In analysing vulgar perceptions,

he was alert. The habit of bringing forward his reasons by way of proof for every proposition became subsequently of use when his school was founded, but it was conducive to rendering his statements at the beginning clumsy and heavy. In his 'Critic of Reason' one cannot help perceiving that he had already then attained the age of 57 and had been lecturing since his 33rd year. The perpetual repetition of the so-called 'Categories' and the innumerable technical terms were prejudicial to the author himself." Goethe at first recoiled before the "Critique." He even said, to all intents and purposes, that it was above his reach. . . . "The gate of entrance" these are Goethe's words—"did please me. I dared not venture into the labyrinth itself: for once my poetic faculty became an obstacle, another hindrance was my understanding. Nor did I feel benefited from it in any way." Later on after the publications of Kant's ethics and aesthetics, which were congenial to his intellect, Goethe did take courage. "Even into the "Critique" of pure reason, methinks I succeeded in penetrating," says Goethe; "for both works, originated by the *same* mind, point perpetually to one another. Thus I inured myself to a terminology, which had been entirely alien to myself at first, and to which I reconciled myself with the greater facility, as I fancied myself being rendered more distinguished and elevated by the more eminent perception of Art and Science, which resulted from them." It is highly satisfactory that after the lapse of well nigh one hundred and twenty years, a scholar like Max Muller has enriched English literature with a translation of Kant's masterwork.

The fame of Kant's lectures became so great that people at a remote distance vied with one another in procuring students' notes. In a most remarkable letter, which Herr von Zedlitz, the illustrious Prime

Minister of Frederick the Great, addressed to Kant, he made the confession that he had thus himself been attending the lectures on physical geography, and asked him the favor of securing him a more competent student's report. The Premier's letter concluded as follows: "Should you, however, not be able to grant me this favor, though I solemnly engage that the manuscript shall never leave my hands, then may this letter serve at least the purpose of assuring you of the inexpressible esteem I feel for yourself and your learning." Soon deeds followed these words, the great Minister proffering Kant the first professorship of philosophy at the University of Halle. But neither the prospect of high emoluments, nor of a more extensive audience, nor of titles and dignities, sufficed to tempt Kant to leave his beloved native city. Does it not seem very singular to us that, in the space of eighty years, an illustrious, world-stirring thinker should never have ventured further than the environs of his native city? His whole life was spent in the narrowest circle, in the most modest retirement, far away from the bustle of the world. He steadily pursued one great aim: the reform of philosophy, and the regeneration of his nation. Rigorous regularity, an almost cast-iron adherence to fixed rules, marked every incident of his life. In the evening it was his custom to take exercise on a promenade, known to this day as the Philosopher's Embankment. It is held in reverence by every patriotic German. How distinctly is it impressed upon my own mind, when forty-five years ago I tried to follow the footsteps of Kant on that embankment, musing on those beautiful verses of the German poet, which I can only attempt to clothe in imperfect English prose: "The ground which a great mastermind has trodden remains for ever hallowed. Centuries still reflect the sound of his words, and deeds to posterity."

With such preciseness did Kant perform his walks that the Koenigsbergers were wont to associate with the Sage the notion of a living chronometer. One day it came to pass that "the man by the Clock" did not make his appearance. How the burghers seemed amazed. What is the matter? they asked. Has illness befallen the Sage? Forsooth! An incident in the intellectual world had put the world out of joint: The publication of a book: Rousseau's "Emile" had reached the philosopher. Entranced with the work, he was devouring its contents. Never did such a thing happen again!

The same orderliness characterised his economic affairs. His income being chiefly derived from fees for lecturing and emoluments, did not fluctuate, and was, at all times, exceedingly restricted. Steady work, however, never caused him to miss more fortunate circumstances. His maxim never to do anything inappropriate or injudicious, extended over his domestic economy. He was particularly sparing of his resources, methodically frugal and thrifty. Never did he squander anything. Neither was he a miser. The practice of thrift was a necessity for independence sake. Never did he accept anything for nothing. Never did he owe a penny, believing in the adage: He that goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing. In his old age he used to pride himself on never once having had a creditor. "With a cheerful heart," Kant said, "I was at all times able to call out when somebody tapped at the door, 'come in'; for I felt certain, it was not a creditor." We may thus easily comprehend how, in his old age, Kant could not fail to become tolerably wealthy. His English friends Green and Motherby, who were shrewd commercial men, advised him how to invest. He was thus able even to leave considerable annuities to his poor relations. The foundation of his happiness in life was self-independence.

He remained a bachelor all his life, apparently agreeing with the Apostle Paul: "marrying was good, but not marrying better." A judicious lady whose testimony he evoked, was wont to express her views thus: "If thou art contented let well alone!" For all that Kant was very fond of chatting with ladies, and was most amiable. But he disliked blue-stockings, or any chat with ladies beyond the scope of mental sociability. He would not have agreed with John Stuart Mill on this subject. Friends would chaff him about his bachelordom, and tried to persuade him to marry. Once a Königsberg parson importuned him when Kant was in his 69th year, bringing with him a booklet specially composed for the occasion, and bearing the singular title: "Raphael and Tobias or a Dialogue of two friends on godly matrimony." Kant contented himself with indemnifying the good parson for his printing costs at least. He immensely enjoyed the fun of telling over and over again the story of that edifying interview with the parson. Although free from egotism and all feebleness of character, Kant, it is manifest, never fully penetrated into those depths of the companionship of life, the delicate, soft human emotions and the conflicts of multifarious duties which a married experience alone is able to fathom and appreciate. This want seems to have left upon his character some imperceptible trace of coldness or reserve, and slight lack of tenderness and susceptibility.

Critics are even at variance regarding Kant's appreciation of friendship. Julian Schmidt goes so far as to assert that, in spite of his cheerfulness and friendliness of intercourse and his general sociability, Kant observed, even towards his nearest friends, an attitude of a certain reserve and mere courteous formality, that he likewise lacked, in some measure, the need of imparting and receiving ordinary tenderness of feeling



and that his private letters bore "a unique character of impersonality." With his most faithful friend Tieftrunk, for instance, he had restricted himself to addressing him bare thanks for the fine parsnips sent to him, and a remark that he had greatly enjoyed them. To Dr. Hertz he had merely made repeated demands of prescriptions for constipation. Now this has the look of an accusation of selfishness and hardness of heart. With all deference to Julian Schmidt I venture to say that he has been guilty of some exaggeration. I have found, for instance, some magnificent letters addressed to the same Dr. Hertz, in which Kant, in masterly language, revealed those struggles in his own mind, through which he evolved his reform of philosophy—confidential letters dated years before the publication of his books. Kant's attitude to his town friends seems alike to have been most cordial and sympathetic. Gush was, of course, conspicuous by its absence, being repugnant to his nature. His best friends were the two English merchants, Green and Motherby, Bank-Director Ruffmann, and the Forester Wobsen, a country gentleman, with whom he was wont to pass his holidays. The acquaintanceship with Green had its origin in a somewhat romantic conflict of political views. A discussion on the great war of American Independence by a number of gentlemen was taking place at Doenhof's Garden. Kant spoke strongly against this country, unmercifully condemning our conduct. Green furiously jumped up, accused Kant, in a fit of passion, of personal affront, and even threw down a challenge. Thereupon Kant responded with such calmness and sagacity that Green was completely won over, tendered him the hand of conciliation, and tied those bonds of friendship which were never severed till death. Green was as punctual a man as Kant. He became the prototype in the

comedy by Hippel of the part of "The Man by the Clock." Green was a whimsical character, but acute and well-educated. His command of German must have been masterly, for we possess a record of Kant stating that "he never wrote down a sentence of the 'Critique' without having previously submitted it to Green." Yet it is so difficult that an intellect like that of John Stuart Mill entirely misunderstood its cardinal chapters, viz., those on Space and Time. Therefore Green's co-operation, in carefully framing the text must have been a Herculean task requiring self-sacrificing devotion which, I opine, is in itself a refutation of Julian's Schmidt's contentions as to Kant's relationship with his friends. Kant must have deserved such self-sacrificing services. Kant's methodic discipline was further exhibited in his systematic attendance to and solicitous care of his delicate state of health. His effort was to make himself hardy and to be abstemious: "Sustine et abstinence," "suffer and avoid"; "forbear and renounce." These were his maxims. Pure reason or moral or will-force had likewise to be applied to the regime of the body. To Hufeland, the author of "The Makrobiotic" he dedicated the valuable essay: "Of the Power of the Mind to become master of one's morbid sentiments by resoluteness of purpose." With his narrow and concave breast and consequent oppression of the heart, he preserved himself from hypochondria by sheer fortitude and firmness. Although constitutionally suffering from depression and a satiety of life he made the firm resolve to fight against it determinedly and to divert deliberately his attention from his ills to other matters. By such methods he even succeeded in conquering the arthritic pains which in his later years prevented him from falling asleep, as well as catarrh and coughing. With his hard brain-work he was very

susceptible to any sort of disturbance. Hence the frequent changes of his domicile in search of greater quietness. Now the shouting of the boatmen on the river; now the incessant crowing of a neighbour's cock formed the causes of his removals. Notwithstanding the most tempting offer, his neighbour would not part with that cock. He felt so miserable that he was driven thereby to purchase a house. But the hymns from the adjacent municipal prison and at times some dance music would fall upon his ears, and once more put him about. Hence probably arose his dislike of music which he styled an "importunate art." He detested all molesters. Obtrusive worshippers who attempted to pry into his secrets, he used to refer to Pastor Schultz. He shunned polemics in general, and, as a rule, would not trouble to read the works of his adversaries. He did not exactly throw them into the waste-paper basket, but knowing the ravenous appetite for literary novelties of the eccentric townsman and witty author Hamann, a combination of customs' official and literary freelance of some fame, he made presents of them to that "curious old man." A manservant Lampe, who had been forty years in his employ having behaved in a rascally manner, Kant only dismissed him after a very severe struggle and the most intense suffering. He resolved to think of him no more. A slip of paper as a reminder of the resolve ran thus: "Lampe must be forgotten." Kant went to bed at ten. He rose at five in the morning. His servant declared that during thirty years Kant had not once broken that rule. He loved to dine in the company of his friends at an hotel. The conversation was always entertaining and humorous. In late years Kant dined at home, but, at all times, some friends were invited for company's sake. Kant died from gradual decay in his 80th year, on the 12th February, 1804. His remains were

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deposited in the Professor's Vault of the Dome of Königsberg. On the celebrated Monument of Frederick the Great under the Linden at Berlin, Kant is represented by a subsidiary statue, which should be taken notice of by those who visit Berlin.

Permit me now to give a few extracts translated from Kant's works to illustrate his frame of mind. "To be happy is of necessity the aspiration of every rational human being. Contentment with one's existence is by no means a primitive possession, but a problem which is imposed upon us by our finite nature." "The absorption of time by carefully planned progressive occupations having a premeditated, high-minded purpose and aim—is the unique safe means at our disposal of attaining happiness in life." "It is absurd to brood over pain which can only cease with life itself, as Nature gave it us as a sting to goad us into activity, and we cannot live without it. Self-satisfaction would lead to a stagnation of the moving springs of life, to the blunting of all our sensations and activities connected therewith. It would be as incompatible with the intellectual life of man, as the stand-still of the heart in the animal body—which, unless followed by a new incitement through pain, inevitably forces on death. One must take nothing to heart. What we cannot help or change, we must strive to forget. This arduous, but imperative task may and ought to be performed with good humour. Ay, even death we ought to welcome with good humour. All this is not worth much, if we perform or endure it with a fit of the sullen and in the spirit of surliness." These significant words of Kant reminded me of the advice which Mrs. Carlyle gave to Mrs. Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter, as related in her "Chapters from some Unwritten Memoirs" in *McMillan's*

*Magazine* (1892): "We have all," Mrs. Carlyle said, "a great deal more power over our minds than it is at all the fashion to allow, and an infinity of resource and ability to use it. There was a time in my own life when I felt that unless I strove against the feeling with all my strength and might I should be crazed outright. I passed through that time safely. I was able to fight it out, and not to let myself go. People can help themselves, that I am convinced of, and that fact is not nearly enough dwelt upon." Is it not very singular that Mrs. Carlyle should thus have given expression to the very quintessence of Kant's teaching? Another sentence from Kant's works is still more emphatic. "The most thorough and most facile means of appeasement of pain is the thought which we are entitled to enjoin upon every rational being, that life altogether, insomuch as it only concerns its enjoyment, must, indeed, be made small account of, that it does only possess worth, insomuch as it is properly applied and directed to high aims and objects. Not Happiness, but wisdom, alone can render it precious. Such preciousness we are all masters of. Whosoever frets about or is troubled or uneasy concerning its extinction, will never enjoy life." In conclusion, let me give you an epitome in Kant's own words of the introduction to the "Critique": "I make bold to say that there does not exist even one philosophical problem for the solution of which there is not, at least, here indicated the key. This age may be best characterised as the age of criticism—a criticism to which everything must submit. Religion, on the ground of its sanctity, and Law, on the ground of its majesty, often do resist this sifting of their claims. But in so doing, they inevitably awake a not unjust suspicion that their claims are ill-founded, and they can no longer expect the unfeigned homage paid by Reason to that which has shown itself able

to stand the test of free inquiry. That the mind of man would ever permanently renounce philosophical investigation is as little to be expected as that we should cease breathing altogether, lest we inhale impure air. The indifference of the age to Philosophy is but a call upon reason once more to engage from the very foundation in the task of attaining the knowledge and judgment of one's self."

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## SONNET.

## THE LAST GIFT.

I only bring two roses, Love, to thee :

I lay them at thy feet that thou mayest know

That as this one is red, that white as snow,

So is my passion—fire and purity.

And when these flowers shall fade and cease to be,

Let not thy heart own one regretful throe,

For their swift drooping shall but plainer show

The biding force of my love's constancy.

And maybe if their petals thou shouldst keep

Till after years, they still shall odour give,

Anew creating days that once were ours—

Those days so filled of joy, so fugitive :

And 'memb'ring my last gift—two simple flowers—

Perchance and thou shalt smile—or haply, weep!

W. V. BURGESS.

